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IMPOVERISHED DESTINY: NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE IN  
POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

By  
Sydney Chapados

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

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Impoverished Destiny: Governance in Poverty Reduction Strategies

By  
Sydney Chapados

APPROVED BY:

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J. Noonan  
Department of Philosophy

---

G. Feldman  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology

---

G. Cradock, Advisor  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology

April 21, 2020

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes policy-oriented approaches to addressing poverty on a municipal, provincial, and national level. Pairing the Foucauldian governmentality framework with the new sociology of childhood, I explore how neoliberal subjectivities are reinforced through Poverty Reduction Strategies, and how the public has come to accept the Poverty Reduction Strategies as progressive, virtuous, and best practice. Using a genealogical approach and discourse analysis, I orient the strategies among previous techniques of poverty reduction to demonstrate that they are a product of their history and have been legitimized over time. I discover that these strategies use virtuous language to pair social and economic well-being through techniques of human capital development and economic contribution. The explicit focus on childhood throughout serves as rationale for reducing poverty by reinforcing an adult/child binary where children are seen as innocent, dependent, and passive. Children are subjected to the most intervention because of their limitless potential. I conclude by arguing that it is imperative that children are seen as social beings who are capable of contributing to their social worlds.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my friends, family, and partner. Thank you for supporting me through the process of writing this thesis. Thank you for providing motivation and encouragement when it was needed. Your faith and confidence in my abilities was the affirmation I needed to produce this work.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PRS: Poverty Reduction Strategy

COS: Charity Organization Society

SHM: Settlement House Movement

SAP: Structural Adjustment Program

IMF: International Monetary Fund

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

WHO: World Health Organization

UK: United Kingdom

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UN-CRC: United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child

NDP: New Democratic Party

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

CODA: Community Operations Development Association

FSG: Foundation Strategy Group

CRDC: Community Recreation Development Council

ODSP: Ontario Disability Support Program

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### *Background to the Study*

Windsor is a mid-sized city in Southwestern Ontario with a population of approximately 233,000 people (Statistics Canada 2016). Its primary industry is auto-manufacturing and it has historically been the automotive capital of Canada (Statistics Canada 2016). Over the past 20 years, Ontario's manufacturing industry has shrunk nearly 30% (McKittrick and Aliakbari 2017). This drop has had detrimental effects for Windsor, as its primary industry faced a significant drop in employment.

According to a Campaign 2000 report that was released in 2018, child poverty in Windsor-West sits at 32% which is nearly double the national average (17.4%) (Campaign 2000 2018). The United Way also released a report in 2014, *The Cost of Poverty in Windsor Essex*, that stated that 18% of people in Windsor-Essex live in poverty and 33% live in low-income neighbourhoods (United Way 2014). This report also highlighted some of the detriments of living in poverty, namely negative health outcomes, lower lifetime earnings, lower educational outcomes, lower literacy rates, and the cycle of poverty (United Way 2014).

As unemployment rates rise, the number of people living in poverty in Windsor appear to be placing a drain on public service institutions such as health care, social services, and criminal justice systems (Bellmio 2019). Social service providers have identified that in their anecdotal experience, more people are accessing services than ever before (Chapados 2019). Without infrastructure to hold all of the people who need social services, many people are left behind or placed on long waitlists (Chapados 2019). This social service "boom" is causing a large amount of spillover, making poverty ever more

visible to the public (Bellmio 2019). Media reports highlight concerns about public safety, well-being, cleanliness, and potential for tourism in Windsor as a consequence of ever-more visible poverty and substance use (Wilhelm 2018, Campbell 2018, Battagello 2018).

## Child poverty in Canada and Ontario since 1989

The percentage of children living in low-income families is lower in Ontario than in the rest of Canada, but continues to be higher than in 1989 when Ottawa pledged to end child poverty by 2000.

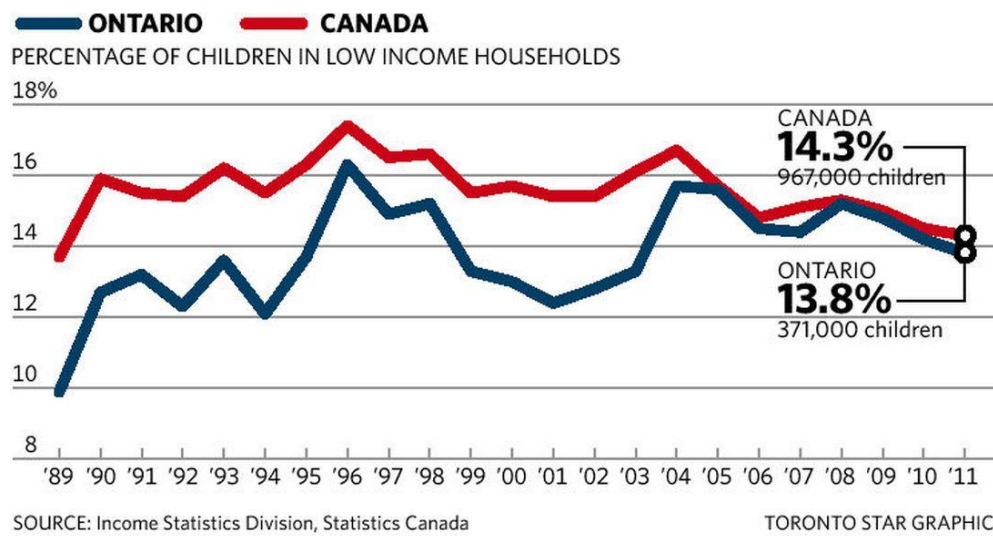


Figure 1: Rates of Child Poverty in Canada and Ontario since 1989<sup>1</sup>

Due to challenges regarding data collection, it is not known specifically what poverty levels are. However, there are estimates that place poverty in Canada as consistently ranging between 16% and 10% over the past 30 years (Canada Government 2017). Figure 1 demonstrates the waxing and waning of child poverty rates in Ontario and Canada over the past 30 years. Nationally, the Canadian government spends around

<sup>1</sup> Image Source: Monsebraatan, L. 2013 “Child poverty rates in Canada, Ontario, remain high” *Toronto Star*

24 billion dollars per year directly on poverty (National Council of Welfare 2011). Provincially, this number resides between 27.1 and 30 billion dollars per year (Feed Ontario 2019). Locally, the estimated spending on poverty alleviation was around 10 million for 3 years (City of Windsor 2016). This begs the question: if the national, provincial, and municipal governments invest such significant amounts of money and resources to alleviate the effects of poverty each year, how is it that poverty levels have remained within the same range?

To begin to answer this question, I first sought to explore how poverty reduction has been conducted in the past, and how it is currently conducted in contemporary society specific to this time and place. Through a literature review that will be discussed fully in Chapter 3, I discovered that poverty reduction has a history that is related to colonial civilizing missions from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward (Valverde 2008; Kennedy-Kish (Bell), Sinclair, Carniol, Baines, 2017). Historical poverty reduction techniques viewed the poor as either morally or physically sick (Valverde 2008). Righteous citizens would intervene into the lives of the poor in order to teach them proper, middle class values and ethics (Valverde 2008). Our current system follows a similar trajectory, however, uses different language than those of the past.

Currently, the National, Provincial, and Municipal governments all have Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) that seek to govern the way that poverty is handled in the country, province, and city. The strategies were created in 2009 (Ontario, Windsor) and 2018 (Canada).

### *Purpose of the Study*

While the prescriptions set out by the national, provincial, and municipal strategies appear comprehensive, this thesis uses a governmentality framework to explore how neoliberal subjectivities are reinforced through PRS's and childhood interventions, and how the public has come to accept these strategies as progressive, virtuous, and best practice. I pair the new sociology of childhood (see James and Prout, 1997) with the governmentality framework that stems out of the writings of Michel Foucault (1979) and subsequent authors who analyze rationales of government; who can govern, what governing is, who is governable, and how to govern best. The purpose of the neoliberal mode of governance is to ensure that all citizens of the state are effectively enterprising and insuring themselves against threats to ensure that they contribute to the economy, wealth generation, and the advancement of the *raison d'état*<sup>2</sup> (Rose 1996).

The PRS's are able to avoid fulfilling their stated goals by effectively shifting the responsibility for alleviating poverty onto individuals and families who already lead precarious lives. PRS's use noble language of supporting to reinforce the structures of capitalism. While PRS's state that their goals are to reduce or end poverty, the objective of this study is to demonstrate that they are first concerned with the maintenance or creation of economic subjects from birth onwards. I do not address the effectiveness of the strategies but I analyze how these strategies have come to be known as fundamentally virtuous.

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<sup>2</sup> Translation: reason of the state. National interest, or a country's goals and ambitions.

What is particularly noteworthy about the PRS's is that they highlight children as their main focus, specifically, children's future potential. PRS's aim to develop children's potential as economic contributors first because of their potential to contribute to the *raison d'état* and the future wealth of the nation. I argue that strategies that solely focus on children's futures ignore children's actual lived experiences and their contributions to their own social worlds. Child poverty is not targeted qua child's experience, but because these children will one day become adults. In poverty reduction, children are simultaneously marginalized and centered. While they are centered as the focus of the strategies, their voices are entirely marginalized as they are seen as passive objects who require intervention and training.

#### *Research Questions and Rationale*

Following the governmentality framework, my study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How has the current model of poverty reduction come to be accepted as best practice?
- 2) How do Poverty Reduction Strategies on all levels of government function to reinforce economic subjectivities?

The ways in which poverty is officially written about in these documents is an implicit feature of social life and requires a close reading of these documents alongside the social context that they were produced in in order to capture how they organize bodies and behaviors. Fundamental knowledge about those who experience poverty that is generally taken for granted or normalized will be excavated in order to shed light on possible different intentions or understandings.



Foucault's theoretical work provides a framework that can be followed to analyze specific social phenomena. Discourse refers to thinking, speaking, and writing about certain aspects of reality (Foucault 1976). While there may be multiple forms of discourse used for any given phenomena at any given time, these discourses are entangled within relations of power that organize which discourses are given precedence over others (Foucault 1976). As a result, these discourses shape and organize reality.

In order to conduct the work for this thesis, I've applied discourse analysis and a genealogical approach to the PRS's in Windsor, Ontario, and Canada. My goal in this project is to understand how the PRS's have been accepted as best practice through the formation of economic subjectivities. An excavation of the adult/child binary is inherent to this analysis. The construction of children's dependent, passive, and innocent nature serves to function as rationale for poverty reduction because they do not *deserve* to be impoverished, and they still have potential to contribute to the economy by following the normative path through interventions.

#### *Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations*

This project relies upon the following assumptions:

- 1) Human existence is a product of socio-historical relations,
- 2) There are multiple regimes of truth<sup>3</sup> that are constructed around these socio-historical relations. Power relations give certain regimes of truth more authority than others. That is, how we come to know things as "true" is largely constructed out of a specific context.

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<sup>3</sup> The types of discourses that a society accepts to be true

This project has the following limitations:

- 1) We cannot know the real intended purpose of the documents nor the specific details of the socio-cultural-historical position that they emerged out of.
- 2) My analysis of these documents is one example of the many ways that they could be interpreted. Other theorists who operate under different knowledge traditions or social contexts could potentially arrive at a different analysis than the one presented below.

This project has the following delimitations:

- 1) I am not looking to examine how poverty has come to exist nor how it persists. Instead, I am examining how the PRS's in Windsor, Ontario, Canada work to produce a specific type of citizen that is self-governing to advance the *raison d'état*.
- 2) These strategies are one form of document in a large web of discourses that attempt to produce citizen-subjects. As such, they are taken as merely one example of this specific type of discursive production. One form of document does not produce these ways of existence but works alongside other mechanisms.

Thus, this project does not claim to present what the *truth* is but provides an alternative framework for reading these policies. The objective of this research is to demonstrate that how we have come to know and accept truths about those who experience poverty is bound up in socially and historically situated power relations. Chapter 2 will summarize the Foucauldian theoretical framework alongside the new sociology of childhood. Chapter 3 will analyze previous literature regarding social

service administration, previous strategies and political economy. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth explanation of qualitative methodology, the purpose of policy, genealogy, discourse analysis, alongside the specific methods of data collection and analysis for this particular case. Chapter 5 will explain the research findings, namely the social context that these documents were produced under, as well as their contents. Lastly, chapter 6 will provide an analysis of the research findings by pairing the governmentality framework with the new sociology of childhood.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis pairs the governmentality framework as developed by Michel Foucault through his lectures at College De France (1979) with the new sociology of childhood in order to understand how PRS's have come to be accepted as a consequence of political economic discourses that aim to construct the impoverished as requiring intervention.

### *The Evolution of Discipline*

Foucault's (1975) analysis of discipline begins with the development of the prison and what he calls a 'micro-physics of power.'<sup>4</sup> The development of the modern prison marks a shift in discipline and punishment. Crime in the sovereign state was treated as a direct offence to the monarch. As a result, discipline was a brutal, ritualistic, and public act of revenge. This form of discipline was problematic because it demonstrated how dependent the sovereign was on the consent of the public. Public executions were necessary to strike fear into the public. However, there were a variety of cases where the public disagreed with the sovereign and acted against their decisions. Hence, discipline was disordered as it was highly dependent on the sovereign's authorization.

It is from this place of disorganization that the modern form of rational discipline arose. Modern forms of discipline use and train the body in order to create a productive, obedient citizen (Foucault 1975). Disciplinary mechanisms meet social problems with order and control to expand a body's capacity and utility for fulfilling the *raison d'état* while limiting their ability for resistance against the state. Modern discipline focuses on controlling the individual's experience of time and space across institutions. This control

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<sup>4</sup> Power that is diffuse throughout society, such that it operates on the smallest, most individual level to refine, train, and correct (Foucault 1975)

functions as a ‘mechanic of power<sup>5</sup>’ that produces the disciplined subject. Prisoners are subject to strict routines that mimic the rigorous schedule of the industrial period. They are punished for lateness, wasted time, and absences to ensure that subjects are exercising their most productive capabilities.

Alongside the management of time, prisoners are also subject to spatial partitioning. Spatial partitioning places prisoners and guards in an ‘economy of visibility.’<sup>6</sup> The economy of visibility arranges prisoners and guards so that the prisoner is seen without seeing and the guard is seeing without being seen. Watching allows prisoners to be “analyzed, controlled, managed, and supervised” (Foucault 1975 p.196). That is, watching allows guards to develop a norm, see which prisoners break the norm, and subject those who break the norm to further training or punishment. Individuals are differentiated based upon how they behave or their disposition, and then ranked in relation to the normal baseline. Watching also allows for the creation of a hierarchy among prisoners where those who conform to the norm set by the guards top the hierarchy, and those who do not remain on the bottom. Here, normality indicates membership into the social body and abnormality indicates deviance from the social body.

Foucault (1975) expands upon Jeremy Bentham’s concept of panopticism to illustrate this point (pp. 195-228). The panopticon is a form of prison that is circular, with a guard tower in the middle (Figure 2). Each of the cells are visible from the tower and vice versa, but the prisoners cannot see inside the tower. Prisoners act as if they are

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<sup>5</sup> Mechanic of Power: how one may have a hold over another’s body, so they operate how one wishes (Foucault 1975, p.138)

<sup>6</sup> Economy of Visibility: the distribution of subjects and objects within a field of (in)visibility (Foucault 1975, p. 187)

constantly being watched because they do not know when or if there is someone in the tower. The thought is that prisoners will begin to self-govern as a result of this omnipresent, unseen guard. This model exemplifies the ideals of modern discipline, that is, omnipresent discipline outside of the immediate use of force and violence. This form of discipline focuses on normalizing, measuring, training, and re-integrating.

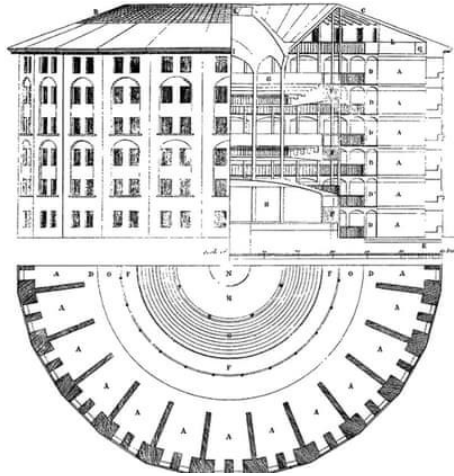


Figure 2: Panopticon<sup>7</sup>

Discipline is not unique to the prison; it extends out of the criminal justice system and across other institutions. Foucault (1975) uses analyses of the school, church, hospital, and factory to demonstrate how disciplinary mechanisms were modelled across institutions in order to create and reinforce the disciplined subject (pp. 231-257). The prisoners become the student, religious follower, patient, and worker. The guards the teacher, god/pope/priest, doctor, and employer. All modern institutions work together to create a useful and disciplined subject through the control of time and space, and normalizing judgements that at once individualize and homogenize.

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault, M. 1975 "The Means of Correct Training" *Discipline and Punish* p.170

From here, individuals are introduced into the realm of documentation and administration. Through various tests, exams, and observations, individuals are constituted as measurable (Foucault 1975, pp. 184-95). An average or norm is determined, classifications are created, and all other individuals who undergo testing or observation are constructed in relation to the determined norm. Individuals who do not compare are opened to further intervention and critique: they become a case.

### *Governmentality*

Foucault's early analysis of discipline is structural. That is, it sees discipline as conducted through social institutions like the prison, school, factory, hospital, and church. His later work on governmentality (1979, 1991) extends beyond institutions and draws on discipline as only one mechanic of power that operates under the broader umbrella of governance and regulation. Hence, discipline is a form of governance that operates alongside other forms that work to control or regulate human populations.

For Foucault (1979), governmentality refers to the art or rationality of government, that is, how to govern best, who can govern, and who is governable. Proper governing ensures that the population is healthy, strong, and wealthy, alongside a state that is competitive and permanent. While the terms 'governance,' 'governing,' and even 'governmentality,' may invoke the idea that governance is an action conducted solely by governments, Foucault's conception of governance extends significantly beyond the formal institution of the state. Instead, the governmentality framework allows us to examine how types of governmental power are exercised or fixed through "institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations, and tactics" (Parton 1994). In this way, the

regulation of populations and bodies transcends state action and operates through both large and small aspects of public and private lives.

Through the Enlightenment period, divine law was heavily questioned, dismantled, and replaced with a search for rational and objective thought (Foucault 1979). As subjects and territory were no longer governed through divine laws and control by a sovereign power, a new form of governing was adopted and reinforced where individual freedom was a guiding focus. To reiterate to this point, populations were no longer governed by force or direct control, but through a subtle apparatus of power<sup>8</sup>. Governance and regulation appear to be common sense and are internalized by the population.

In order to fully grasp the concept of governmentality, it is necessary to provide an analysis of discourse<sup>9</sup> and power. Discourse largely influences, constrains, or constructs truths. It is through discourse that concepts are given authority, explained, and decided upon. In any particular apparatus, certain discourses are given more authority than others, which also allows certain voices to be privileged over others. Regarding the acceptance of discourse as truth, Foucault (1984) states:

Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (p. 73)

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<sup>8</sup> Apparatus: A thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions (Foucault 1977)

<sup>9</sup> Discourse: the ways in which people/institutions write, speak, and think about things



It is through discourse that populations are constituted as subjects to be regulated. In order to determine how best to govern human populations, they first become object of discourse; of study, observation, and analysis. The analysis of human life and population through demographic measures like mortality rates or birth rates also measures how healthy a state is and what areas need to be improved upon. This observing, studying, analyzing, and eventually training on the basis of human existence is what Foucault (1979) refers to as ‘biopolitics.’

Drawing on Hacking’s (2006) concept of dynamic nominalism, every category or classification has a history to be excavated. Hacking notes that since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an intensive increase in official statistics collection, and the division of the population based on categories. Initially, the collection of statistics was done for philanthropic reasons: to find out more about the population and reduce the negative conditions under which they exist. Of course, as Hacking notes, this collection was generally done with the goal of strengthening and preserving the state.

When institutions seek to count people, they must classify or define them in some way. For Hacking (2006), classifications have five elements: the classification itself, the people who fill this space, institutions involved in counting, knowledge that constitutes that category, and experts who classify people as included or excluded from the category. For example, when considering classes, humans are not naturally sorted into different classes. Lines have been drawn to delineate which people are ‘impoverished’ and which people are not.

Hacking also identifies ten engines of discovery which drive the human sciences (social sciences, psychology, psychiatry and clinical medicine) to know about humans. These are: count, quantify, create norms, correlate, medicalize, biologize, geneticize, normalize, bureaucratize, and reclaim identity (2006, n.p.). Using these engines, humans become an object to be known, discovered, held up against a norm, and subjected to intervention. These engines take the Foucauldian notion that power and control can be exercised over people by observing and comparing to a pre-established norm, and includes methods of observing, comparing, and correcting.

Political economy is the regime of truth that establishes neo-liberal governmentality (Foucault 1979). This regime of truth places the market as the site of veridification. That is, the market determines the true order of society through neo-classical economic processes like supply and demand. Political economy operates on the idea that wealth creation is the only way to ensure a healthy and strong population and state (Foucault 1979, Rose 1996).

Because the market is seemingly independent from government, governments are able to self-limit and separate themselves from the processes of the market, truth, and law. The responsibility for wealth creation is shifted onto individuals and their capacity for enterprising, insuring, and investing. In a globalized, neoliberal mode of government, every society must maintain themselves in the face of foreign competition; they must remain competitive without dominating other nations (Foucault 1979). Hence, the modern state is concerned with governing the perfect amount, not too much or too little. Human well-being is secured through individual enterprise, productivity, and innovation. While political-economy or neoliberal regimes of truth and rationalities are largely

economic, I will demonstrate that the technologies and mechanisms at work in poverty reduction are not *all* economic in nature.

Foucault and other theorists have referred to the relationship between the state and its citizens as a 'contract' (Foucault 1979, Rose 1996). In the contract, the state provides its subjects with the opportunity to survive and succeed, and subjects fulfill their piece by working and providing economic gain and stability. Rose (1996) provides a framework for differentiating between those who fill their contract and those who do not. On the one hand, the affiliated are those who fulfill their contract to the state: they contribute to the economy and are capable of making proper, rational decisions regarding investments and insurance. As a result, they are granted full citizenship, respect, and independence. On the other hand, the marginalized are those who do not fill their piece of the contract either because they lack the ability to manage themselves, or they *choose* not to by virtue of their own moral failures. The marginalized require intervention. Those who are capable of reformation will be given assistance and training. Others will be diagnosed, medicalized, treated, or held so that they are not a threat to society.

### *The Subject*

Power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize, and which others have to recognize in him. (Foucault 1982, p.781)

Three methods of power exist that seek to subjugate humans: domination, exploitation, and subjectification (Foucault 1982). Subjectification works through 'pastoral power'<sup>10</sup> that promises salvation to its' subjects (Foucault 1991 p.3). In the

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<sup>10</sup> Power which is salvation-oriented, modeled after the Christian doctrine that promises salvation to those who align their behaviour with the prescriptions set out by religious teachings

modern form of political economy, pastoral power promises health, protection, and growth.

Here, individual freedom is not an ‘antithesis to power’ (Cruikshank 1999 p. 4). Instead, power is only operationalized through its action which requires individuals to be seen as actors. Individuals are active allies in their own economic gain, as well as economic gain for the state. Foucault (1979) argues that the modern form of western governmentality is unique because it *relies upon* and *functions through* individual freedom and autonomy. The ideal subject of liberal governmentality is one who is responsible and capable of making good investment decisions for themselves.

Governmental reasoning involves making the *proper* way of existing appear to be common sense, or good for individuals. This is what Rose and Miller (2010) term ‘governing at a distance,’ or governing through one’s sense of themselves as free. The regime of truth that holds that individual wealth creation is good for both individuals and the state dominates individual choices and actions. It is through the subject’s idea of themselves as free from state control that they are regulated and encouraged to fill their piece of the contract as a free citizen.

Economic subjects are capable of enterprising themselves. That is, they make an enterprise of their own life by developing their human capital, envisioning a future, and working towards it. Individuals are educated, persuaded, encouraged and managed by diffuse apparatuses that teach them how to make the ‘right’ decisions. Insurance and risk largely play into processes of subjectification (Ewald 1991). Risk refers to a probability or possibility of danger. Insuring against risks is to be future minded, to take responsibility for possible future dangers in the present, and to add a layer of security so

that failures can be survivable. Insurance ensures that enterprising is possible and individuals take responsibility for future outcomes. Hence, a responsible neoliberal subject will insure themselves against future risk. Subjectification is central to this project as I aim to excavate how PRS's reinforce classifications, normalizations, and persuasions that seek to create an economic subject who values and engages in wealth creation, competition, insurance, enterprising, and investment.

### *The Child*

The place of the child within economic governance is a difficult one to configure due to children's historical marginalization in theoretical concepts and studies, as well as society more broadly. Children are seen as fundamentally different than adults. Historically, they have been viewed as passive, dependent, irrational, weak and in some cases, unintelligent, wild, or even dangerous (Corsaro 2016). When children were considered, historical approaches suggested that the child needed to be controlled and tamed by teaching them the ways of society. Other theories of childhood (primarily located in the realm of developmental psychology) focus on how they are active learners who can understand and replicate their social worlds. Both of these approaches view children through a development or socialization lens. Thus, childhood is theorized as an unstable journey that eventually results in a stable adulthood. For childhood theorists, viewing childhood as a journey ending in adulthood is referred to as seeing children as human *becomings* not human *beings*.

A human *being* is “stable, complete, self-possessed, self-controlled, capable of independent thought and action, and merits respect” and a *becoming* is “changeable, incomplete, lacking self-possession and control” (Lee 2001 p.5). In the past, adulthood

was a relatively stable phase where people would get a job and get married. Here, childhood did lead to a semi-knowable end. However, as adulthood becomes decreasingly stable due to increasing economic precarity, the dichotomy between the unstable child and stable adult is coming under investigation. Childhood theorists recognize that perhaps adult life was never as stable as it claimed to be. The regime of truth that states that adults are more rational, intelligent, and capable than children serves to reinforce the control adults have over children and their decisions.

When adults are viewed as inherently rational, strong, capable, stable and intelligent, children are viewed as lacking these characteristics (Lee 2001 p.5). The adult is fully human and is allowed to function in society because of these assumed characteristics. Because children themselves are largely ignored by theorists, statisticians, and adults more generally, the place of the child in understanding subjectification is largely absent. They are denied their subjecthood. Children are passive objects who must internalize a great deal about society as they grow before they can even be considered subjects. I argue, however, that children are the largest target of regulation because of their future potential. As they are consistently treated as ‘becomings,’ the focus of governmentality and the child is to govern in a way that ensures that the child flourishes in the future (Lee and Motzkau 2011); to intervene to ensure that they will have the desired future of becoming an economic contributor. Qvortrup (2009) highlights that although looking forward is not necessarily negative, if the motivation for looking forward is only to better society and not children or childhood then children are being overlooked and “instrumentalized for means that are distant and alien to them” (p. 632).

Considering Rose's (1996) delineation between the affiliated and marginalized, or the contract more generally, the place of children is unclear. They cannot be affiliated members of the society because they can hardly contribute to the economy in a formal way and are dependent on their parents or the state for survival and protection. They are also not marginalized in Rose's sense because it is not their own personal failure that prevents them from contributing. In my analysis of the PRS's and their simultaneous marginalizing and centering of the child, I use the contract and the affiliated/marginalized dichotomy to understand the place of children within economic governance. I also argue that it is imperative that children are seen as individuals with wants, needs, and desires, who undergo the same social processes as adults, and contribute to their social worlds. PRS's and society more generally should see children as children in their own right.

### **3. RELEVANT SCHOLARSHIP**

Following the Foucauldian (1991) conceptual framework, history produces the present and it is necessary to excavate the historical and social conditions that allow phenomena in the present to come into being. This chapter will begin by addressing poverty reduction and its history with the goal of identifying how this study provides a needed contribution regarding contemporary poverty reduction techniques. This chapter will also provide an analysis of the existing studies regarding PRS's in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and internationally.

By historicizing poverty reduction techniques, I provide some of the context that ultimately leads to the acceptance of our present-day strategies as best practice. The history provided below is not made up of distinct stages, but involves many overlapping levels of projects, charities and institutions that influence and are influenced by one another. Each of these techniques that attempt to reduce poverty operate under similar regimes of truth that focus heavily on the social, moral, and ethical characterizations of the poor. There is no complete collection that provides a full history of poverty reduction. Instead, I have pieced together a semi-cohesive narrative by accessing public records from the 1800's onward using Leddy Library's ProQuest media database, Erudit's Historical Research Papers, Statutes of Upper Canada 1831-1950 (Canadiana Digital Collection), as well as drawing on other scholars who have attempted to historicize poverty.



### *Early History: Poor Laws and Houses of Industry*

England operated on the poor law system where individuals were given relief by parish either in the form of ‘outdoor relief’ (sick or aged individuals are given money, items, or food to relieve them of their problems) or ‘indoor relief’ (able bodied individuals who were not working are placed in a ‘house of correction’ to work) (Clark and Page 2018). Because residents were generally known to the people running the parishes, these ‘overseers of the poor’ were able to determine which people were deserving of relief and which were not. The fear of living impoverished was thought to increase people’s motivation to work.

In the late 1700’s, the system of outdoor relief was developed for able-bodied low-wage earners (Marshall 1968). Eventually, this system was heavily critiqued for providing indiscriminate aid and creating a dependency on the relief provided by parishes (Clark and Page 2018). People were discouraged from working because they would be given relief regardless. Poor relief was also seen as intervening into the natural laws of the market and preventing capital accumulation (Baehre 1981).

Baehre (1981) suggested that the 1830’s marked an ideological shift in approaches to the poor and relief. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 was a very far-reaching piece of legislation that had demonstrable effects in Canada as well (Baehre 1981). Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Canada, poor laws were resisted primarily because of the aforementioned critiques: that they increased dependency on relief, discouraged the population from working, and interfered with the natural way of things (Guest 1980). As a result, prior to 1817 in Canada, there was no institutional relief for the poor (Baehre 1981). Instead, relief was occasionally given based on decisions made by magistrates or

private individuals on the basis of providing social or communitarian support (Baehre 1981).

A large increase of people immigrating to Canada in 1817 caused a large increase in distress, requiring institutional intervention. Here, the “Society for the Relief of Strangers in Destitution” was founded on a largely voluntary basis and offered subsistence through food and milk (Upper Canada 1820). Over time, increased immigration required more assistance for the destitute (Public Archives of Canada 1829). Relief eventually expanded to include local poor populations as well (Council Papers 1836). As this assistance was increasingly expensive, assistance eventually became dependent on a sort of taxation of the public in the form of solicitation or collection (Baehre 1981). Taxation was held to be negative among the general population, and as a consequence, other types of relief were created including the Emigrant Asylum, asylums for the insane and destitute, and the Children’s Friend Society. Notably, the Children’s Friend Society sought to train children in the ‘habits of industry’ and moral and religious foundations (Public Archives of Canada 1833).

In 1832, a large immigration of an estimated 10,000 paupers arrived from England (Upper Canada 1832). Where the above-mentioned societies could provide temporary or material relief, increased population volumes required a more permanent form of relief. As well, processes of urbanization and industrialization caused different forms of poverty than in the past, largely due to economic cycling and unemployment (Inglis 1971). The economic depression in the late 1830’s caused a re-evaluation of practices that led to the more permanent form of relief: the workhouse. (Council Papers

1836) The workhouse was to provide minimal outdoor relief when needed or indoor relief for those who were the most destitute and would not survive without aid.

Notably, Baehre (1981) demonstrates that the transition from voluntary societies to the workhouse between 1817 and 1837 marks a shift in four forms: from temporary to permanent relief, tightening definitions of the deserving poor, significantly rising costs of providing aid, and the institutionalization of relief. Institutionalization is a particularly important shift because it brings poverty alleviation into the same realm as the prison and the asylum which controlled and enclosed their respective populations through rules, regulations, oversight, and forced labour (Baehre 1981). Moral management and social control were applied throughout these institutions and were seen as both rational and economical (Baehre 1981). Records of inmate's behavior were kept, particularly noting cleanliness, order and regularity. There was always the threat of removal if an inmate were to display any sort of vice such as idleness or disorder (Archives of the City of Toronto 1834). Houses of Industry continued to operate until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when they evolved into other forms of charitable residence like old-age homes (Smith 2015).

### *The Standard Account and Development of Social Work*

The negative conditions of the workhouses generally prevented people from entering them unless they absolutely had to. Consequently, many of the poor or low-wage earners were discouraged from applying for relief (Valverde 2008). Poverty continued to persist and became a very public and visible concern. Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, processes of industrialization, urbanization, and population growth led people to increasingly live in close quarters with one another (Valverde 2008). Consequently, concerns regarding vice, immorality, crime, filth and the spread of disease became common place. The poor were

seen as particularly susceptible to or the cause of disease and immorality. Over time, scientific or biographical studies were conducted in order to locate what was unique about these populations that made them susceptible to these problems (Margolin 1997). Through these studies, the poor are made an object of knowledge, as well as amenable to action.

In order to create an equal and prosperous society for future generations, other forms of aid or relief were required to reduce the effects of vices and influence people to act in a proper, economic-minded manner (Valverde 2008). Interventions were justified on both a moral and public health level, conflating sin, poverty, illness, and vice. These interventions can generally be traced back to the birth of contemporary social work. This took place in two forms: on the one hand, rational or scientific charity in the form of Charity Organization Societies (COS), and on the other, radical social work in the form of the Settlement House Movement (SHM).

COS's operated on a voluntary basis where individuals would 'visit' the homes of the poor, observe, make notes, analyze, and train them in proper middle-class habits, such as thrift, punctuality, and hygiene (Margolin 1997, Chapman and Withers 2019). Of course, a stranger invading the private home with a notebook would prevent families from acting in their 'natural' way. Consequently, a lot of attention and detail went in to training visitors to appear friendly or nonchalant. For example, Margolin (1997) highlights that visitors were trained to pretend to be waiting for the train or to share a meal with the family in order to get an accurate reading. Only through first knowing the poor and their history could one then attempt to help them. Observation and analysis were able to reduce the system's tendency to give too much by demonstrating which

families needed which types of intervention, if they required intervention at all. The COS model set the stage for the current mode of social work that is largely based around casework and individual intervention.

The SHM is often portrayed as the other side of social work as it operated on a model of mingling (Chapman and Withers 2019). Settlement houses were placed in lower class neighbourhoods where middle-class volunteers would take up residence within them and provide education, recreational classes, and activities for their neighbours. This movement largely saw the problem of poverty as external to the individual, and consequently, was seen as fundamentally opposite the COS's which saw poverty as an inherently moral problem.

Scholars have begun to demonstrate that these two models are not as distinct as has been claimed (Chapman and Withers 2019). While one model may believe that poverty is external to the individual and the other believes it is internal to the individual, both models follow a similar trajectory requiring intervention by a middle- or upper-class person in order to shape the lower-class person's behaviours and knowledge towards capital accumulation. Chapman and Withers (2019) refer to this as "the healing powers of class," such that adopting the habits of higher-class people would heal lower class people of their problems. These habits relate back to the colonial mission of bringing civilized values to the world, and the PSY complex which aims to diagnose and train people.

In these models, both the lower- and upper-class subjectivities are shaped in opposition to each other. Those who are 'helping' are active through this process and come to see themselves as morally good in contrast with the moral failings of those who are being helped (Chapman and Withers 2019). Religion largely justified those

conducting interventions, as early social workers were considered akin to missionaries.

As Margolin (1997) notes, both Christianity and social work are endowed with benevolence and sacrifice: to serve, help, and minister.

### *Modern Social Work*

The separation of these two models also serves an implicit function in today's social work. The radical/traditional divide continues to pervade current models of social working. Social workers may align themselves with that of the SHM by believing that there are structural barriers influencing people's abilities for upward mobility (Chapman and Withers 2019). However, the system of social work is set up very much like the COS's individual case work model. While social workers or even organizations might align themselves with radical or anti-oppressive social work, this effectively absolves social workers from recognizing their function in intervention and the problematic history of these very organizations.

When analyzing why so many social workers eventually end up distancing themselves from their profession, Margolin (1997) highlights that social workers exist at a contradiction between helping and imposing. The stated goals of social work are necessarily clouded in virtuous language that emphasizes warmth, friendliness, and helping. However, individuals are largely placed under investigation by medico-social experts, diagnosed or classified, and trained or taught through different programs which serve to impose capitalist values. It is through increasing diagnoses and classifications that interventions become increasingly personal and private.

This method of social work is largely seen as empowering individuals to take control of their own life through upward social mobility, however, it cannot alleviate causes of poverty. Considering that social work is an ad hoc intervention that responds to previously established needs, it requires people to first enter poverty in order to exit it. A steady stream of people in and out of poverty reinforces the need for and apparent effectiveness of social work.

### *Theories of the Welfare State*

While outdoor relief had severely diminished after the introduction of the New Poor Laws in 1834, World Wars I and II, as well as the Great Depression in the 1930's, largely changed the consensus regarding the provision of money to the poor (Quandango 1980). Large increases in welfare spending had occurred after the end of World War II and continued increasing until the 1970's (Quandango 1980). The Keynesian economic system held that welfare spending would stimulate demand and increase balance in the economic cycle. Here, welfare was largely seen as contributing to social stability. However, a series of crises over the 1970's would soon dismantle the Keynesian hypothesis, leading to spending cuts specifically regarding social programs.

The same discourses that permeated the initial decision to remove outdoor relief in 1834 continued to play a part in this process of welfare cuts, namely reducing capital accumulation and incentives to work. Reflecting on the introduction of the 1834 Poor Law, Edwin Chadwick states:

The increase of pauperism and of burthens on the rates appeared to be due to the mal-administration of the legal provisions for compulsory relief, to the imbecility, or to the sinister interests of ignorant local administrators, and to

habits of the recipients of the rates induced by lax administration (Chadwick 1864, p.492)

Here, Chadwick highlights that increased poverty is not a consequence of population growth as others have suggested, but a consequence of indiscriminate aid. In 1977, American President Ronald Reagan comparably states that welfare: “encourages dependence, expands government control over people’s lives and dumps uncontrollable cost increases on the taxpaying public.” (Reagan cited in Crafton 2014). The general pattern of social expenditure continues to follow economic cycling, however, the legacy of the cuts in the 1970’s and 80’s has reduced the possibility for increases in welfare spending.

There are a variety of theories about the welfare state that are worth mentioning. The most popular theories of the welfare state often see welfare as an inevitable consequence of industrialization and population growth (Quandango 1980). Increasing bureaucracy and wealth surpluses allow for the creation of national benefits. Other theories suggest that a high level of state involvement, high level of union presence, or stemming collective action are all possible rationales for the creation of the welfare state (Quandango 1980). Marxist theories largely follow the latter, suggesting that welfare gives enough benefits to the public to prevent a revolution and deradicalize the working class. Welfare is largely seen as possessing a uniform objective to maintain social cohesion.

For Foucault (1979), social policy and social welfare ensure that every individual has the opportunity to engage in the economic game. At the foundation of political economy is the opportunity for each individual to generate wealth for themselves. Welfare can by no means be considered wealth generation or accumulation because of its



minimal character, however, it can ensure the population is able to survive in order to enter or re-enter into the economy. Fitting with the political economic regime of truth, welfare is only seen as a ‘helping hand’ and should be used temporarily in cases of unemployment until people are able to train for the labour market. Again, the minimal character of welfare is thought to reduce dependency and encourage people to try to find work. However, there are always concerns about welfare fraud, which open the population accessing welfare to increased surveillance (Hewitt 1983). Considering that welfare is already constructed as an additional expenditure, welfare fraud is especially morally reprehensible as it wrongfully redistributes money from the deserving to the undeserving.

#### *Poverty Reduction as Development*

While welfare can ensure a vital minimum so that people do not die as a result of their situation, poverty reduction in Canada largely focuses on the development of human capital as its main focus. On a global scale, poverty is largely attributed to modes of production. Non-industrialized countries<sup>11</sup> are seen as more susceptible to poverty due to food shortages, lack of investment, corrupt government, and unstable politics (this is not necessarily a causal relationship, but all of which reinforce each other). Consequently, high levels of poverty and low levels of profit needed to be addressed.

In order to introduce a more profitable, market-based economy, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) were implemented, where non-industrialized countries were given loans by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ameliorate

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<sup>11</sup> Often called ‘third world,’ ‘developing,’ or ‘global south’

deficits on the condition that these countries would restructure their economy in order to pay back the loans as quickly as possible and reduce further deficits (Joseph 2010). Since the 1990's, SAP's have refocused to include poverty reduction as one of their stated goals. However, SAP's have been widely critiqued because they require intensive privatization and economic restructuring to export based economies (Joseph 2010). SAP's may increase the opportunity for wealth creation, however, they effectively destroy local economies and the lives of people living in these countries due to lowered access to education, health care, and local forms of sustenance .

Joseph (2010) highlights that SAP's are an example of governmentality on a global scale. While SAP's initially operated in a direct manner that imposed market-based economies as a condition of loans, the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) model encourages local governments to create their own programs in order to attract stakeholder investment and economic growth (Joseph 2010). In creating these programs, local governments and organizations present their program to the World Bank and IMF who will then approve or amend the proposed program. Upon the implementation of their program, governments and organizations also commit to a measurement and reporting process that can demonstrate their progress. Increased investment and economic growth are contingent on countries' abilities to demonstrate their progress in this way.

Notably, what was once a very clear statement regarding the imposition of market-economies for deficit and competition purposes has now been rebranded as a poverty reduction technique. The solution to poverty is once again found in economic restructuring and entering into the economic game. Encouraging countries to conduct this

restructuring for increased investment and wealth operates on these countries' abilities to act as an agent who is capable of reducing poverty for themselves. Joseph (2010) examines how states come to accept the PRSP's but does not address subjectivity.

### *Current Approaches in Canada*

Western poverty reduction techniques generally funnel people through social services that work to develop human capital, so that individuals can enter into the market-based economy through enterprise. Some studies of PRS's in Canada applaud the national and provincial governments for acting on the issue of poverty (See Barata & Murphy, 2011; MacInnes, Bushe, Kelly, & McHardy, 2014; Notten & Laforest, 2016; Torjman, 2008). For example, Barata and Murphy (2011) specifically note the unification of stakeholders and groups across disciplines in the creation of this strategy, as well as the inclusion of the voices of low-income populations.

Critiques of Western PRS's are generally needs-based approaches that examine what needs exist followed by how well the strategies can address these needs. Benbow et al. (2016) conducted interviews with homeless single mothers and effectively highlight how the Ontario strategy does not pay enough attention to gendered differences in the experience of poverty. By listening to the voices of women, the strategy could address their needs more fully. However, these researchers effectively essentialize homeless single mothers and construct them as a unified group with specific (and similar) needs. While the authors suggest that a multi-layered intersectional approach is necessary, they further reinforce the construction of a unified group of homeless single mothers. Posing social services alongside increased agency and representation as the solution to poverty remains an unquestioned plan.

Smith-Carrier and Lawlor (2016) use a critical discourse analysis approach to examine the actors within the Ontario PRS and the role that they play (social actor analysis). They set out three groups: government, people in poverty, and community organizations. Their analysis of people in poverty throughout the Ontario PRS demonstrates that people in poverty are simultaneously stripped of their agency while being expected to take control of their situation by accessing education and employment. The question of agency posed by the authors is problematic, as I've identified above that it is through one's capacity to act that they become a subject.

Smith-Carrier and Lawlor (2016) also pose the strategy against the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of poverty as an attempt to create an avenue for improvement. The researchers suggest that writers should follow a rights framework which focuses on access to food, housing, water etc. regardless of one's individual capacity to contribute to the economy. While this could be an *improvement* on our current strategy, the proposed interventions are ad hoc interventions that require the government to continue to hold the active role in redistributing resources. Other critics suggest that the strategies do not pay enough attention to economic recovery after the Global Financial Crisis in 2008 (Fernando and Earle 2008) or that they are lacking a strict timeline (Benbow et al. 2016).

Most of this policy-oriented research aims to provide recommendations for future policy that will include the voices and opinions of the marginalized. Assuming that strategies can be tailored more effectively to meet the needs of the groups they are trying to address either directly or indirectly constructs the marginalized as a unified, singular group with singular needs. Arguing for increased representation and empowerment

absolves the state of responsibility for the poor by shifting responsibility on to the public by creating a responsibilized and self-governing public. These specific approaches will always require a reformation of social services so that the state better allocates resources or training to the public. The government and other institutions would continue to play the active role in helping individuals, and people in poverty are always only viewed as passive recipients of aid needing reformation.

All of the previous studies mentioned do not address poverty reduction's history. Their silence on this history creates the appearance that poverty reduction is a new phenomenon beginning in the 1990's. Following Margolin (1997), I argue that these studies inherently see any attempt at poverty reduction as a "step in the right direction" and their virtue is never questioned. At worst, the strategies are deemed ineffective. Rights- and needs-based approaches to poverty governance are continuously limited by their lack of attention to subject creation, especially considering children's roles, again confirming the marginalization of the child in academia and society. I aim to question the very creation of these strategies, and locate them within a history of normalization, moralization, and intervention. A focused attention on the place of children has the potential to demonstrate the intensity of subjectification from birth onwards. As Rosen (2019) highlights, even the most intense critics of neoliberalism can believe that neoliberal interventions are good for children. However, we must recognize that children do not have the same interests as the neoliberal state.

While post-colonial scholars have recognized that SAP's and PRSP's are a direct form of governance, regulation, and control (Joseph 2010), current studies concerning Western society and poverty reduction do not recognize how poverty reduction, and more

specifically, childhood intervention can operate as a mechanism of neoliberal governmentality. When there is an international body acting upon a historically subjugated country, the position of the governor and governed is clear. This type of governance can be seen as something that occurs ‘somewhere else,’ that Western countries have already undergone, and that is necessary for the survival of other countries. However, the same processes are at work in Western countries on a different scale.

The studies above highlight the previous scholarship regarding the Ontario and Canadian PRS’s, as well as the World Bank and IMF’s PRSP program. I attempted to conduct a similar literature review regarding the municipal strategy by searching the Leddy Library database, the Windsor Star (local newspaper), and google scholar. This search garnered no relevant scholarly results aside from reports presented by the United Way and Campaign 2000 mentioned in the introduction and the PRS itself. This lack of reputable data and analyses leads me to conclude that poverty in Windsor is an understudied phenomenon, and the strategies themselves have been uncontested since their development. This project hopes to fill that gap by providing a critical analysis of how poverty reduction is used in this time and place in order to contribute to the creation of economic subjects.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study employs discourse analysis using a scheme that I derived through reading the governmentality literature and Foucault's other major works including *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976). This framework is applied to the poverty reduction strategies: *Pathways to Potential* (2009), *Breaking the Cycle* (2009), *Realizing our Potential* (2014), and *Opportunity for All* (2018) alongside a variety of events and reports that preceded their creation, to answer my research questions:

- 1) How has the current method of poverty reduction come to be accepted?
- 2) How do poverty reduction strategies on all levels of government function to reinforce economic subjectivities?

##### *Foucault's Method*

While Foucault does not set out a method for research per se, his theoretical works have informed methodological techniques in genealogy and discourse analysis. At the basis of genealogical analysis lies the idea that history is produced in the present and the present has ties to the past (Foucault 1982). While the present is often seen as distinct or new, it is necessary to recognize that every technique, rationality, or category has a history. Genealogy does this by analyzing a particular problem or concept as a function of its history by examining how something was legitimized and produced over time.

Foucauldian analyses generally begin with a question regarding *how* concepts or things become recognized as natural, normal, or universal. In his lectures at Collège de France, Foucault (1979) poses the following:

I start from the theoretical and methodological decision that consists in saying: Let's suppose that universals do not exist. And then I put the question to history and historians: How can you write history if you do not accept a priori the

existence of things like the state, society, the sovereign, and subjects? It was the same question in the case of madness. My question was not: Does madness exist? My reasoning, my method, was not to examine whether history gives me or refers me to something like madness, and then to conclude, no it does not, therefore madness does not exist. This was not the argument, the method in fact. The method consisted in saying: Let's suppose that madness does not exist. (p.3)

Foucault (1979) uses this explanation to demonstrate that the motivation to historicize these concepts is not to somehow prove that they are not real, do not matter, or do not affect people's experiences. Instead, excavating concepts in this way can demonstrate that the concept was shaped and used in a particular way with a particular intent. If one were to take, for example, that poverty does not exist, one would then be in a position to examine the practices that are organized around this concept. However, poverty does exist, and the effects of poverty are real. Examining the strategies organized around the concept poverty is not to discount the lived experiences of poverty but to instead highlight that the very concept of poverty works to organize social relations.

Foucault's main project is to understand practices, namely, how practices have come to be acceptable. In order to understand punishment, Foucault asked not 'what is punishment?' but 'how does one punish?' making the argument that all practices have rationales (1982). In my case, I seek to understand poverty through an analysis of the practice of reducing or governing poverty. The official plan for reducing or acting on poverty is located within the PRS's.

### *Document Analysis*

Analyzing documents can provide an insight into the way that social organizations and groups operate, as well as to understand how discourses are given authority. Documents are produced and consumed socially and are a medium for



information to be shared, as they are created for a particular purpose and in a particular manner that gives them value (Coffey 2014). While documents can never be taken as whole truths, they do provide versions of reality. To this point, the documents I have chosen cannot and do not explain the actual, material experience of living impoverished. They cannot address the day-to-day operations of organizations or governments. Certainly, they do not stand in place as a participant to study poverty for the impoverished. However, they are worthy of study because of how they operate.

On a very general level, policy has a purpose. Policy is always created with intention, despite its unintended consequences when applied in the social world. It is meant to organize relations between governments, NGO's, actors, concepts, and technologies (Shore and Wright 2011). Policy is also endowed with a certain level of authority because it is produced by an authority figure and is seen as rational, amoral, and bureaucratic, capable of analyzing a problem and acting upon it to create a known outcome (Shore and Wright 2011). However, an analysis of policy and its socio-cultural production can work to deconstruct policy's seemingly inherent authority.

Studying policy is important for a variety of reasons: to provide insight into how governments or NGO's classify and regulate bodies and spaces, to subvert the idea that all people are rational actors and that policy is inherently rational, and to understand how policy can operate as a form of governance (Shore and Wright 2011). This project explores how PRS's organize and fix the positions of the impoverished in opposition to those who are not impoverished including the general public, social service workers, organizations, and governments.

As Shore and Wright (2011) mention, policy can be applied in different places using four different approaches: 1) diffusion: where there is a common point of origin and it spreads outwards, 2) transfer: where knowledge, institutions, administration, or ideas from one setting are used in another setting than they were initially intended, 3) convergence: where structural forces drive institutions to come to similar approaches or conclusions, 4) interpretive: where discursive and material practices create regularized patterns that enable and constrain them. Aspects of each of these approaches can be demonstrated in the development of these policies.

### *Data Collection*

My own work in social services led to my initial interest in poverty and poverty reduction. As mentioned above, I began to look for information about poverty: causes, effects, and techniques for its reduction. In my preliminary search for poverty reduction techniques, I discovered the Ontario Government's plan to reduce poverty: *Breaking the Cycle*. As I continued to search, I found that both the municipal and national governments also utilize PRS's that outline their respective government's plan for poverty reduction: *Pathway to Potential, Opportunity for All*. I used the PRS's as my starting point for this project, to understand how political-economic discourses operate on all levels of government to produce a productive citizen. I specifically chose the Windsor, Ontario, Canada strategies for reasons of proximity.

In order to locate these strategies within their *conditions of possibility*,<sup>12</sup> I conducted a literature review (see chapter 3) regarding the general history of poverty reduction and social working. To garner a more specific excavation, I began from the

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<sup>12</sup> Conditions necessary for a concept to be known

Windsor, Ontario, and Canada PRS's and traced the historical events and documents backwards. Each of the strategies outline a variety of events that preceded the creation of the strategy such as community consultations or organizational reports. Working from the strategies, I searched the respective government websites to access the stated documents that preceded each of the strategies. Each of these documents continuously outlined other documents or events that preceded their creation. I continued to follow the creation of each document using this method. I conducted a content analysis on these reports, deliberations/debates, and events to understand the logic and rationales that influenced the creation of the strategies.

These preceding documents include:

- *Helping the Poor: the IMF's Facilities for Structural Adjustment* (International Monetary Fund 1992),
- *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* from the 67 countries in the Global South who have created them (List of Countries - Appendix A) (International Monetary Fund 2000-2016)
- *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers Good Practices* (International Monetary Fund 2004)
- *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: A Guide* (Bretton-Woods Foundation 2003),
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations 1989),
- *Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child* (League of Nations 1924),
- *Declaration of Rights of the Child* (United Nations 1959),
- *House of Commons Debates* (Canada Parliament 1989, 2009, 2011),
- *An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada* (Canada Parliament 2011),
- *Tackling Poverty Together* (Canada 2017),
- *Consulting Canadians on Poverty Reduction* (Canada 2017),
- *A Backgrounder on Poverty in Canada* (Canada 2017),
- *Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy* (Canada 2017),
- *What We Heard About Poverty* (Canada 2017),
- *Opportunities for All* (United Kingdom 1999),
- *25-in-5 Founding Declaration* (25-in-5 2007),
- *A Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario* (Campaign 2000 2007),
- *A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus in Ontario* (25-in-5 2009),
- *Cities Reducing Poverty Brochure* (Tamarack Institute 2020),
- *10: A Guide for Cities Reducing Poverty* (Tamarack Institute 2016),
- *Toronto for All – Income Security* (Toronto 2007),

- *A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Techniques* (Tamarack Institute n.d.)
- *Developing a Common Agenda for a Poverty Reduction Plan* (Tamarack Institute n.d.)

### *Data Analysis*

Discourse analysis has a variety of different meanings that are largely dependent on the theoretical tradition under which they are operating. Unlike other forms of discourse analysis (for example, critical discourse analysis), Foucauldian discourse analysis does not have a formal, step-by-step process to follow. Instead, I have devised my own process which first involved examining the history and context under which these documents were produced, followed by a line-by-line analysis of the strategies.

Using Foucault's theoretical works as a starting point, I placed each line of the strategy into a table (Appendix B) where I did two levels of coding: *In Vivo* where I pulled out specific lines of text or statements that captured the 'what' of what was being said, and *Focused* where I interpreted, organized, and analyzed the statements I pulled in the previous level. I also added another column for questions or comments I made as I went through the data. It was through this initial process that the focus on children became apparent. The focus on children within the strategies also led to a focus on children in this project.

My concern with this project is to analyze the mechanisms of power that construct PRS's as acceptable and political-economic discourses as truth. Discourse is a social practice through which power is exercised. Consequently, the focus on discourse is essential to the point of this project. Regarding elements of the Foucauldian method previously discussed, I largely analyzed three categories of data: 1) the place of the

*raison d'état* in the strategies (what is the goal of the state?), 2) the methods of conducting or accomplishing the *raison d'état* that are employed throughout the strategies, and 3) the methods of subjectification such that citizens adopt the *raison d'état* and act in a way that accomplishes it.

I also conducted an analysis on the tools of legitimization<sup>13</sup> employed within the strategies. In order for the population to accept something as true, there must be conditions that constitute it as believable. Although certain discourses employed in the strategies may be speculation, theory, or opinion, they are seen as best practice and thus given a certain level of influence to organize social relations. This scheme examines the elements of language that are used in order to endow these discourses with the level of influence such that they are adopted as truth and the strategies are adopted as best practice.

This method addresses my research question because it first seeks to understand poverty reduction in a historical light in order to excavate the conditions that have led to the current governmental approaches to poverty. In uncovering these conditions and providing an in-depth and critical reading of the current approaches, I aim to demonstrate that the current approaches to poverty largely serve the *raison d'état* by utilizing discourses that reinforce the regime of truth, political-economy alongside the adult/child binary, to create subjects that are mobilized towards the creation of wealth, both for their individual and collective survival.

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<sup>13</sup> the discursive or linguistic techniques that work to constitute a discourse as true or a practice as acceptable

### *Ethical Considerations*

While analyzing documents does not require formal ethics review because it does not directly involve the participation of human subjects, it is still necessary and useful for researchers to consider how their positionality can impact their study and analysis (Day 2012). Because low-income groups are politically, economically and socially marginalized, the implications of these studies are serious. Every researcher comes to the field with a certain way of viewing the world. While there has been a heavy focus on denying one's point of view in order to become an objective researcher, I reject the notion that any scholar can entirely forego their past experiences during their time in the field. Consequently, I will outline some of my own experiences, points of view, and roles that impact my interactions with the research for this project.

I have worked or volunteered in social services from a young age. I was always placed in the position of helper and never experienced the other side of this dynamic. I have no experiences of living impoverished, but I do have an intricate understanding of the policy and service systems that work to regulate poverty because of my previous work in social services. My experiences in social services have led to some of the questions surrounding this research project.

In the 2018-19 year I received a funding grant to conduct research in Windsor's downtown core regarding the centralization of social services. This project deepened my quest to understand how we conduct poverty reduction in the City of Windsor. While the data for that project is not applied here, the information that I was given by social service workers through those interviews also helped with the development of this project and my research questions.

Examining the PRS's from a certain amount of distance allows for a critical examination of the construction and governance of those in poverty. While this is a direct critique of the strategies employed in this time and place, the fundamentals of my own positioning within these strategies are indirectly explored and critiqued. I aim not to reinforce power dynamics between the classes, but to illuminate the power dynamics that are already in play. By rendering power visible and naming what is omitted from the strategy, I aim to further explicate how poverty is constructed and citizens are governed through normalization and moralization.

## 5. FINDINGS

The development of the PRS that are the focus of this report is not reduceable to a single line of events. Below, I address the development of the strategies regarding some of the specific events and policies that precede their creation. The timeline is not comprehensive, however, because it involves many overlapping events and discourses that are reinforced from multiple points. Footnotes are used to refer to each source document as it is used, if it is not previously stated within the text.

### *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Introduction into Developed Countries*

Current models of poverty reduction overwhelmingly stem out of the World Bank and IMF model of the PRSP's. This model provided the first comprehensive and streamlined approach to reducing poverty for an entire country. The IMF and World Bank are both co-operations of countries which attempt to secure the global financial situation and aid with development. From the IMF website:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other.

—*International Monetary Fund, "About" 2020*

From the World Bank website:

With 189 member countries, staff from more than 170 countries, and offices in over 130 locations, the World Bank Group is a unique global partnership: five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.



—*World Bank, “Who We Are” 2020*

While they are not the same institution (the World Bank has a stated focus on micro level economics and the IMF has a stated focus on macro-level), both of these institutions provide conditional, structural adjustment loans. SAP’s began in the 1950’s by providing deeply impoverished countries with conditional loans.<sup>14</sup> These loans provided countries with financing to begin to shift to long-term economic growth. The conditions attached to SAP loans involved: currency devaluation, austerity, eliminating subsidies, raising prices of services, cutting wages, liberalization of markets, privatization of services and institutions, transitioning to an export-based economy, and lowering government employment.<sup>15</sup>

Intensive criticism of the SAP’s suggested that they largely allowed the Western world access to commodities and resources, increased cash flows to the West, and vastly reduced the quality of life for populations residing in the countries in question (Joseph 2010; Shams 1988; Bradshaw, Noonan, Gash, and Seršen 1993) These criticisms led the World Bank and IMF to change their focus to poverty reduction. Referring to this period, the World Bank’s history states:

Projects related to food production, rural and urban development, and population, health and nutrition were designed to reach the poor directly. Bank operations also expanded to identify and encourage policies, strategies, and institutions that helped countries succeed. The Bank initiated sectoral and structural adjustment loans deemed necessary for the success of its projects.

—*World Bank, “History” (n.d.)*

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<sup>14</sup> International Monetary Fund, “Helping the Poor: The IMF’s Facilities for Structural Adjustment” 1992

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

While the beginning of this statement suggests that the World Bank did in fact change their approach, the latter half of the statement highlights that the World Bank continued to provide structural adjustment as ‘deemed necessary.’

Instead of removing SAP’s, the World Bank and IMF refashion them as poverty reduction in the form of the PRSP’s:

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) are prepared by the member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as eng development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Updated every three years with annual progress reports, PRSPs describe the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a three year or longer horizon to promote broad-based growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated eng financing needs and major sources of financing.

—*International Monetary Fund, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers” (n.d.)*

Loans are now conditional on the development of these programs and reported commitments to ensure that development money is spent on poverty and programs to combat poverty. This model of intervention is said to give developing countries more autonomy and control over their poverty reduction techniques<sup>16</sup> despite their continuing large focus on macro-economics and neoliberal restructuring.

The PRSP’s operate on a country by country basis, with each country setting out programs that are specific to their needs. PRSP’s are developed on five principles: 1) country owned, 2) results oriented, 3) comprehensive in recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, 4) partnership oriented, 5) based on a long-term

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<sup>16</sup> Bretton Woods Foundation, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: A Guide” 2003

perspective.<sup>17</sup> While the IMF and World Bank do not make specific recommendations, they do provide a series of *good practices* that influence the likelihood of a PRSP being accepted:

While an attempt to make specific recommendations or establish further guidelines on the PRSP process and content would run counter to the principle of country ownership, a number of “good practices” have emerged from country experience to date.

—*International Monetary Fund, “PRSP Good Practices Guide” 2004*

These practices point to: coordinating donor efforts (specifically those of the IMF and World Bank) in order to address ‘weak ownership of countries,’ integrating PRSP’s into pre-existing government processes, clarifying indicators to collect poverty data, monitoring and evaluating the program regularly and making revisions when necessary, and developing a focus on macro-economic policies.

Currently, 67 countries in the global south have created PRSP’s (Appendix A). These documents are different depending which country they are prepared for, however, they do follow a streamlined approach such that they address: 1) the situation of poverty in their country, 2) opportunities for sustainable economic growth through macro-economic policies, 3) infrastructure and urban development, 4) goals for the poverty reduction strategy, 5) the involvement of social actors, 6) sustaining a business environment and private sector, and 7) a commitment to reporting, measuring, and implementing.<sup>18</sup> These strategies largely pair poverty reduction with economic growth.

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<sup>17</sup> Bretton Woods Foundation, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: A Guide” 2003

<sup>18</sup> International Monetary Fund, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers” 1999-2016

While PRSP's were initially intended for use by non-industrialized countries, industrialized countries began adopting this model in 1999 beginning with the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom adopted the PRSP model under Tony Blair's New Labour party. Blair's government largely focused on Third Way politics, that focused on adapting or combining both right- and left-wing approaches after the failures of Keynesianism and the fall of the USSR in 1991 (Klein and Rafferty 1999). As stated in the UK strategy:

It is morally wrong and economically foolish to allow a whole generation to be written off. You can't choose between a successful and stable economy on the one hand, and confronting poverty and its causes on the other. Fairness and enterprise go hand in hand. That is why we have set some demanding goals to make Britain a better place to live in the next century.

—"Opportunities for All," *United Kingdom, 1999*

This statement highlights that very combination of social and economic well-being. Third Way politics fit seamlessly with the PRS's in that they advocate for social reform alongside and *through* economic reform and growth.

#### *Development of Opportunity for All*

As mentioned in Chapter 3, increasing urbanization and living in close quarters with other people led to an increased awareness of family violence (Inglis 1971). Concern for children largely played into the creation of social work and poverty reduction during this time (Parton 1994). Children's rights were developed first through the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1924). This declaration was followed with the creation of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (1946),

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration of Rights of the Child (1959), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (UN-CRC).

All of these declarations provide rights to children such that they are able to live a healthy and happy life and grow up in a supportive way. The UN-CRC was specifically stated as a precedent to poverty reduction commitments. The UN-CRC outlines a variety of special rights for children that involve protection, participation, and provision, among other articles. Notable articles to the point of poverty include: Article 3 (All actions concerning children shall take the best interests of the child as a primary consideration), Article 19 (States shall take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation), Article 24 (The right of the child to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health), and Article 27 (The right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development).

Just one week after the presentation of the UN-CRC, the issue of child poverty was tabled at the Canadian House of Commons by NDP leader Ed Broadbent.

Broadbent introduced the motion that the House adopt a commitment to end child poverty by the year 2000. The UN-CRC was cited as one of the reasons for doing so:

Canada is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This week we actually signed the formal declaration that passed in the UN. We have an obligation to act here in Canada. We must bring our standards up to recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.

— *Lise Bourgault, House of Commons Debates, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 5, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 p.6214*

Alongside citing the UN-CRC, speakers claimed concerns about increases in family violence:

In the past, family violence and child sexual abuse were seen as strictly private matters. We are only now beginning to understand the depths of these problems and the number of child abuse and wife battering cases being reported to authorities is growing dramatically (...) Canada can no longer tolerate exploitation of the most vulnerable by brutal individuals.

— *Perrin Beatty, House of Commons Debates, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 5, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 p.6199*

disease or other health concerns:

Since then [1982], 3000 more [cases of AIDS] have surfaced. As the disease spreads through the heterosexual community, we see more mothers giving birth to children infected with HIV

— *Perrin Beatty, House of Commons Debates, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 5, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 p.6201*

changing family structures:

We know that by the year 2000, there will be more women in the workforce, a trend we must continue to expect for some time. As a result, we must make sure that women have full access to the labour market/ this means that we have to ease the transition back and forth from child raising to the workplace

— *Perrin Beatty, House of Commons Debates, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 5, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 p.6200*

and national debt:

If we keep going at this rate, which is adding another \$30 or \$35 billion to the debt each year, by the year 2000 our accumulated debt would approach three quarters of a trillion dollars. That would be the worst thing that we could do for the future of our children. Why should they be saddled for the excesses of their parents?

— *Perrin Beatty, House of Commons Debates, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 5, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 p.6201*

After making the case for action, the House unanimously adopted the resolution to end child poverty in 1989. The goal of the resolution was to unify previous efforts of poverty reduction under a streamlined approach by the Canadian government for both social and economic purposes. However, a lack of action by the federal government to this goal was recognized by many community leaders and resulted in the creation of Campaign 2000 and other mobilizing efforts over the subsequent 30 years.<sup>19</sup>

Twenty years after the resolution, the NDP again brought forth the issue of child poverty to the House of Commons. At this point, the NDP highlighted that all parties generally agree to ending child poverty, however, may have had different reasons for doing so. He stated:

Regardless of our politics, I believe there is consensus to do just that. Indeed, for a wide range of social, economic and spiritual principles across the spectrum, there is motivation and reason to do so

— *Tony Martin, House of Commons Debates, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 144, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, p.1005*

and continued by providing empirical data that demonstrated the necessity of reducing poverty including low wage jobs, unemployment, and food bank access. This motion was met with criticism from a member of the Conservative party, who argued that the conservative government was already taking appropriate measures regarding poverty:

We have made progress toward the elimination of child poverty. A good deal of this progress can be traced to good economic performance and to rising incomes in good economic times, as well as to good jobs for more Canadians and hard work by Canadian parents and families.

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<sup>19</sup> Campaign 2000, “Founding Declaration” 1991

—*Ed Komarnicki, House of Commons Debates, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 144, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, p.1010*

Other speakers continue to demonstrate that this progress is not enough, and many of the initiatives in place that would work towards ending child poverty had been cut by the Stephen Harper Conservative government:

The Canada child tax benefit proposed significant investments to the tune of \$13 billion per year. It provided \$9 billion in income support to help more than three million low- and middle-income families. We also committed \$5 billion to work with the provinces and territories to improve and expand early learning and childcare across this country, including the 2003 multilateral framework on early learning and childcare. A number of these agreements have been cancelled by the current government.

—*Raymonde Falco, House of Commons Debates, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, Vol. 144, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, p.1010*

While the House of Commons again adopts the resolution to end child poverty, there is no official progress or strategy on this goal until the election of Justin Trudeau's Liberals in 2015.

In 2011, the NDP government proposes Bill C-233: *An Act to Eliminate Poverty*. This bill largely pushes the Canadian government to adopt a PRS based on the federal government's commitments to human rights through the United Nations and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, alongside the negative effects of poverty on social, economic, and physical development. The bill also suggests that the federal government is largely behind other countries and the provinces and municipalities in Canada. However, the bill was struck down by the Conservative government, citing the economic mandate as the



first, most important tool to reduce poverty. The plan or potential for a poverty reduction strategy was continuously brought up in the House of Commons, however, was never actionable until 2016 largely due to conservative opposition and potential economic effects:

Madam Speaker, Canadians gave us a clear, strong mandate. They want us to respect the money they make and the money we receive in taxes, and they want us to spend it very wisely.

The best way to fight poverty is to get Canadians working. Our government is doing just that. We have created 600,000 new jobs since July 2009.

Every action we have taken has been to help Canadians and their families become independent and help them contribute to their economy and their community.

Sadly, the NDP voted against every one of those initiatives to help vulnerable families.

-- *Kellie Leitch, House of Commons Debates, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Vol. 146, September 27, 2011, p. 1910*

Highlighting that economic stimulation combined with lower taxes are more than enough to address poverty.

The Liberal government disagrees, advocating for an approach that pairs economic stimulation with social investment. Upon the election of the Liberal government in 2015, a variety of reports and studies were conducted and subsequently released regarding the situation of poverty, the need for an official strategy to reduce poverty, and what a strategy might look like in Canada. These include: *Tackling Poverty Together* (2017), *Consulting Canadians on Poverty Reduction* (2017), *Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2017), *A Backgrounder on Poverty in Canada* (2017), and *What We Heard About Poverty* (2017).

The first reports released were *Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy: Discussion Paper* and *A Backgrounder on Poverty in Canada*. In conjunction, these reports provide an in-depth analysis of the situation of poverty, as well as a call to action on the situation. The *backgrounder* explains how poverty is measured (Low Income Cut-Off, Market Basket, and Low Income Measures), the statistics over time (such that Canada has a general downward trend), the short term nature of poverty for most people (such that only 1.5% of people in poverty live in poverty for more than 6 years), the vulnerable groups that are affected by poverty (children, Aboriginal Canadians, people with disabilities, single-parent families), problems for the working poor (low wages, low benefits, the precarity of schedules or contracts), challenges for upward mobility, and problems of poverty beyond income (housing, food, health, and crime). This report is largely an empirical report, drawing on statistics produced by Statistics Canada across various surveys.

The discussion paper draws on the above-mentioned statistics to present a call to action:

Poverty affects the strength and resiliency of our communities. Economic growth can slow and even decline when the middle-class struggles, income inequality rises, and poverty persists. In this sense, poverty reduction and sustainable, inclusive economic growth—growth that creates opportunities for all to participate in, and benefit from, Canada’s economic success—are intrinsically linked. Canada can do better. When Canadians act together, hope can be restored for those who have lost it. Together, we can ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to meet their potential and support their families and communities.

—“*The Call to Action*,” *Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy*, Canada Government 2017

Again, this call to action pairs social well-being and economic growth. This paper explains some of the detriments of poverty such as: income and meeting basic needs, lack of housing and homelessness, unemployment and precarious work, lack of education, and low health. It also highlights groups that are more likely to face poverty: children, seniors, people with disabilities, single-parent homes (usually mothers), visible minorities and recent immigrants, and First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities. It then provides a commitment to measurement and reporting by 1) establishing community partnerships, 2) choosing a target, 3) making data improvements, 4) choosing indicators, and 5) reporting on progress.

The Canadian government then conducted consultations with people from a wide array of backgrounds and occupations, some of which are stakeholders, others of which are living in poverty, and released the results in their *What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far* report. However, they do not provide their empirical data to this point. This report highlights 16 different problems or barriers including: housing costs, homelessness, nutrition, health, food security, mental health and addiction, finding work, affording school, accessing job training, low wages, accessing childcare, benefits, unemployment, ongoing colonialism, accessing services, and judgement from service providers.

To provide an explanation for these barriers, the report draws on consultations regarding other strategies they've created such as the National Housing Strategy, Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Food Policy, Accessible Canada, Youth Employment Strategy, Labour Market Transfer, and Urban Aboriginal Strategy; statistics from Statistics Canada; anecdotes from people in poverty that highlight their survival:

(...) she has suffered the daily stresses of living in poverty and struggling to make ends meet. Despite being on her own since she was 15 years old, Nadia is a survivor.

-- *"Inability to Meet Basic Needs," What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government, 2017*

perseverance:

Even though she has gone through many difficult periods in her life, Nadia has made it through because of her hard work and perseverance. "I would tell people not to give up... if a door closes, there is always a door open." "I am glad where I am today, for myself."

-- *"Inability to Meet Basic Needs," What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government, 2017*

gratitude:

Even though she faces many housing challenges, Fatuma considers her neighbourhood her home. "I am not ashamed of what I am going through. Even though I didn't expect this, being in Canada, but at the same time, I am thankful for what I have."

-- *"Inability to Meet Basic Needs," What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government, 2017*

and accomplishments:

Ultimately, she decided to apply for the job, but there were more challenges to face. For example, when she initially applied, she didn't know what a cover letter was. Fortunately, she learned how to successfully write one with the help of a community empowerment group that teaches development skills to women to help improve communities.

Juanita says that leaving income assistance was a major accomplishment for her. She hopes that people coming together in her community can help solve many of the persistent poverty issues.

-- *"Challenges in Joining the Middle Class," What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government, 2017*

The report also draws on quotes from various experts and other participants:

Poverty is one of the factors that most strongly affect the health of the population. Low-income individuals are at a

greater risk of obesity, activity limitations, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and premature mortality

-- *Mémoire des directeurs de santé publique de Montréal et de la Capitale-Nationale (Québec)*, quoted in “*Challenges in Joining the Middle Class*” *What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government 2017*

Our government knows that not all Canadians have sufficient access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, and we are working hard to address these and other challenges related to poverty and food security in Canada.

-- *The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food*, quoted in “*Inability to Meet Basic Needs*,” *What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government 2017*

and youth who had become engaged in the conversation through a contest. Finally, the report provides some critiques about Canada’s lack of a clear measurement, to demonstrate that clear measurements, indicators, and targets can lead to a clear action plan:

Setting explicit, public and visible targets for social indicators, such as the incidence or depth of poverty, can serve as an element of the ‘social contract’, help focus policy-maker efforts, and work as an enabler for civil society.

-- *Francisco H. G. Ferreira, The World Bank*, quoted in “*Targets and Indicators*,” *What We Heard About Poverty Thus Far, Canada Government 2017*

Alongside the *What We Heard* report, the government also created a project entitled *Tackling Poverty Together*, that engages with the public to understand what life is like for people living in poverty. They created 8 key takeaways: 1) Poverty exists in Canada but much of it is hidden, 2) Many Canadians cannot pay for basic necessities and face significant barriers to work, which take an emotional and physical toll, 3) Poverty affects some groups more than others, 4) Canadians living in poverty are survivors, but

they need more support to make a bigger change in their lives, 5) The Canada Child Benefit and Guaranteed Income Supplement are making a big difference, 6) The federal government offers other important programs that could be helping, but very few people are aware of them, 7) Many people cannot access the support they need because of how some programs are designed and delivered, and 8) Canadians were unanimous that there is a need for more support in different areas, and by different levels of government, to help people overcome poverty.

After the release of these reports and projects, the Canadian government launched their strategy, *Opportunity for All*, in 2018, and enacted the *Poverty Reduction Act* in 2019 that legislates the government's commitment to the PRS.

#### *Opportunity for All.*

The Canadian PRS: Opportunity for All (2018) touches on eleven chapters: Opportunity for All; Taking Stock of Accomplishments; Dignity; Opportunity and Inclusion; Resilience and Security; Working with Provinces, Territories, and Communities; Working with Indigenous Peoples; Ensuring a Lasting Impact; Improving Measurement of Poverty, Gender-Based Analysis Plus; and Going Forward: Canada in 2030. The PRS also begins with a message from the minister, Jean-Yves Duclos, and a forward from the Economist in Residence at Employment and Social Development Canada, Miles Corak. These messages discuss details of the consultations, what they heard, and their honour in creating the PRS using the details from the consultations.

The strategy begins with an introduction that orients what is to come, explains the title of the strategy, and provides a context regarding poverty in Canada. It explains that

the strategy outlines areas the government is seeking to improve as well as a commitment to measuring and tracking progress. The strategy defines poverty as:

The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.

-- *Opportunity for All, Canada Government, 2018*

It continues to add that while there are increased vulnerabilities for some populations, no one is immune to poverty, and while all people in poverty work hard, some face barriers and need additional help through setbacks. It also cites reasons to reduce poverty, including that it threatens the strength of our communities, health difficulties, employment concerns, reducing time spent in the criminal justice system, reducing reliance on social assistance, and ensuring children have a future outside of poverty. Reducing poverty allows greater economic growth, community, and social mobility.

The Canadian PRS follows three pillars or goals that guided the creation and implementation of the PRS. These are:

Dignity – Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring everyone's basic needs are met;

Opportunity and Inclusion – Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity; and

Resilience and Security – Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience.

-- *Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

The actions and measurements developed follow these three pillars.

Chapter two of the strategy outlines some of the progress the Canadian government has already generated regarding reducing poverty. Some of these techniques

have “immediate impacts on reducing poverty and making a difference in the lives of Canadians,” where others “are laying the foundation for changing the lives of Canadians in years to come.”<sup>20</sup>

Regarding dignity, the government has invested in children as a top priority because of their stated likeliness to remain in poverty. They introduced the Canada Child Benefit, that address families’ abilities to meet basic needs, join the middle class, and stay out of poverty for good. The strategy also outlines seniors as an important group, providing support through retirement with the Canada Pension Plan and Guaranteed Income Support. Outside of these priority groups, many different initiatives were put in place to ensure that all Canadians can meet their basic needs. These initiatives include investments in housing, homelessness, transit, and community spaces.

Regarding opportunity and inclusion, a number of initiatives were created to ensure full participation in the work force or in education. Some of these are aimed at children, like early learning and childcare, while others are aimed at adults regarding skill training and apprenticeship grants.

Regarding resilience and security, these initiatives seek to help Canadians when they face challenges. These initiatives generally address employment concerns such as employment insurance, precarity of work, working benefits, working conditions, labour code updates, and support in retirement. However, there are other initiatives as well such as healthcare or research into the opioid crisis.

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<sup>20</sup> Canada Government, “Taking Stock of Accomplishments” *Opportunity for All*, 2018



Chapters 3, 4, and 5 each refer to the above-mentioned pillars, respectively. These chapters explain the indicators and measures (Appendix C) that the government will use to analyze each of these pillars. Regarding dignity, the indicators are food, housing, healthcare, and income, to measure the population's ability to access healthy food, affordable housing, health care when it is needed, and money for additional livelihood purposes. Regarding opportunity and inclusion, the indicators are literacy and numeracy, youth engagement, relative low income, and the bottom 40% of income share. While opportunity and inclusion are both difficult concepts to measure, the government uses these indicators because they measure the basic skills needed for employment, youth on the correct track to prosperity, and the percentage of Canadians joining the middle class. Regarding resilience and security, the indicators are the hourly wage, percentage that enter/exit poverty each year, average shortfall, and the number of Canadians with savings and assets. These indicators generally attribute progress in resilience and security to raising wages and lowering the number of people who fall into poverty.

Chapters 6 and 7 both refer to partnership techniques. Chapter 6 refers to creating partnerships with all levels of government in order to reduce repetition in programs and initiatives, and to reduce barriers in accessing these programs and initiatives. Chapter 7 refers to the Canadian government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous governments in creating Indigenous focused initiatives. These specific initiatives are highlighted because of the Indigenous people's unique experiences of colonialism and racism that has entrenched their experiences of poverty.

Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11 refer to the government's commitment to reporting and measuring. Chapter 8 addresses how reporting will ensure the long-term effectiveness of

the program. The government sets out an official measure of poverty that measures Canadian's abilities to purchase a basket of goods and services in their community. Using this consistent measure across the country allows the government to set a general target for reducing poverty, in this case, 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2030. Alongside these targets, the above-mentioned indicators will be reported on. In order to ensure accountability, an external advisory council was developed and legislated that will report on the condition of poverty and government processes outside of government.

Chapter 9 addresses the need to improve on measurement techniques. The strategy states:

All Canadians should expect a solid evidence base to inform progress on poverty reduction. Quality evidence leads to informed decision-making, which in turn leads to helping more Canadians reach their full potential.

-- *"Improving Measurement of Poverty" Opportunity for All, Canada Government, 2018*

Following this logic, accurate reporting, data collection, and data analysis techniques will inform a more accurate approach to reducing poverty. Hence, the government is investing in data collection in order to more effectively and efficiently tailor their efforts to address poverty.

Chapter 10 refers to the usage of the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens in creating the strategy and the individual initiatives involved in the strategy. The GBA+ recognizes differences in experience based upon membership in different groups. The GBA+ outlines women, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, single parents, unattached individuals, Indigenous peoples, trans-gendered and non-binary individuals,

and individuals from Black and other racialized communities as groups that face unique risks and experiences. The GBA+ helps the government to understand these risks and needs of diverse groups in order to tailor their strategy to meet those needs. While children are highlighted above as being an extremely vulnerable group, they are not involved in the GBA+ data collection.

Chapter 11 outlines the goal for 2030, a Canada that is:

Both a global economic leader and a kind and generous country where no one is left behind. A Canada that adapts to changing economic conditions and benefits from a healthy and productive workforce. A Canada that has met the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and where meaningful progress has been made against the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Ultimately, Canada in 2030 will be a country where all Canadians can contribute to the best of their ability and reach their full potential.

-- *“Going Forward,” Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

highlighting that the PRS seeks to contribute both to the economic well-being of the country, alongside the social well-being of individuals and communities. This chapter also addresses some areas the government plans on working towards that are not addressed in the strategy like a food policy or a pharmacare policy. Finally, this chapter puts a call out to all Canadians to become involved in poverty reduction because:

Acting together, we can ensure that in the Canada of 2030, all Canadians will live with dignity, have real and fair access to opportunities, and remain resilient through all of life's challenges

--*“Going Forward,” Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

### *Creating Breaking the Cycle and Realizing our Potential*

While the Canadian government did not act on their obligation to the creation of a PRS until 2018, provinces and municipalities had already begun filling the gaps with their own strategies, beginning in 2002 with Quebec's *Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté et l'Exclusion Sociale*.<sup>21</sup> The Ontario government was largely affected by the creation of Campaign 2000 and other Toronto based organizations that would mobilize towards the goal of reducing poverty (Hudson and Graefe 2011). The Toronto Community Recreation and Development Committee (CRDC) hosted a conversation in May 2007 that invited experts to speak about the issue of income security in Toronto.<sup>22</sup> This meeting largely discussed issues related to the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and concluded that income security within the municipalities required greater support from the Ontario government. Hence, the 25-in-5 Network was formed by various anti-poverty organizations to lobby the Ontario government towards the creation of a PRS.<sup>23</sup>

The 25-in-5 Network aimed to follow the same model as Tony Blair's 1999 PRS, seeking advice from Lisa Harker, who was involved in the creation of the Blair strategy (Hudson and Graefe 2011). Harker suggested that getting a government commitment to measure and address poverty was the most important step to reducing poverty. Members of the network met with members of government from the NDP, Conservative, and Liberal parties, however, only received a commitment from the liberal government. Based on the creation of a PRS in Newfoundland, members also decided to:

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<sup>21</sup> Translation: Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion

<sup>22</sup> City of Toronto, "Toronto for All" 2007

<sup>23</sup> 25 in 5, "Founding Declaration" 2007

(1) emulate the loose network organizational structure used in Newfoundland so as to quickly mobilize a province-wide movement; (2) develop an alternative community-based policy agenda; (3) promote this alternative blueprint by creating more extensive influence channels with elected officials, especially Cabinet Ministers; (4) pursue positive engagement with the government. (Hudson and Graefe, 2011)

Thus, they decided to create secondary strategies to secure more backing from government. At this point, the Premier Dalton McGinty Liberal government had committed to the creation of a PRS. The 25-in-5 Network continued to work towards this goal, producing a policy template that the Ontario government could adopt: *A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus in Ontario* (2009).

*Blueprint* serves to provide recommendations for a PRS based upon community consultations in Ontario. They cite a variety of reasons for creating a PRS including a looming economic recession with lasting effects, the Global Financial Crisis of 2008:

Ontario heads into the upcoming provincial budget with a shaky economic future as the storm clouds of a global recession gather over Canada. In many ways, Ontario is at the epicenter of this economic storm. (...) While no one can predict how long and how deep this recession will be, there is widespread consensus that it is up to governments to invest in infrastructure, shore up consumer confidence, and make our social programs recession-proof;

--*Blueprint for Economic Stimulus in Ontario, 25-in-5, 2009*

a lack of progress from the federal government:

Unfortunately, the federal government's approach fell far short of the remedy required. While doubling the Working Income Tax Benefit and increasing funds for affordable housing are welcome measures, Ottawa's haphazard laundry list of initiatives failed to provide a coherent strategy for recovery and hope. The federal government has also abdicated its responsibility to protect the vulnerable in these hardest of times, placing greater pressure on the upcoming

Ontario budget to fill in gaps that our most senior level of government chose to ignore;

--*Blueprint for Economic Stimulus in Ontario, 25-in-5, 2009*

and recommendations from the IMF:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommends jurisdictions invest 2 percent of their GDP to help jolt the global economy out of its current slump. Ontario needs to do its part. The IMF has recognized that investments in anti-poverty programs can be most effective at pumping much needed activity into local economies. It advocates increasing transfers to low-income people because they will spend it quickly and locally, resulting in a faster, positive impact on the economy than other kinds of spending.

--*Blueprint for Economic Stimulus in Ontario, 25-in-5, 2009*

again, demonstrating that the IMF model continues to penetrate all levels of poverty reduction.

*Blueprint* also provides recommendations that the Ontario government should employ in their PRS including reviewing social assistance, increasing food supplements, increasing Ontario Works and ODSP, changing restrictions for Ontario Works and ODSP, creating a new housing benefit, increasing access to childcare, creating an equity and anti-racism strategy, increasing access to education, creating a community partnership strategy, raising the minimum wage, improving employment standards and equity, and increasing employment support for people who are accessing social assistance.

The Ontario government also released their consultation report that provided very similar recommendations to that of *Blueprint*: sustaining employment, livable incomes for people on social assistance, affordable housing, addressing the specific effects of poverty on vulnerable populations, anti-racist policies, early learning and child care,

transportation, education and training, funding for community-based agencies, coordination of service delivery, community engagement, and measuring success. Many organizations, consultations, and reports were involved in the creation and subsequent acceptance of the Ontario PRS in 2009.

*Breaking the Cycle and Realizing Our Potential.*

*Breaking the Cycle* (2009) and *Realizing Our Potential* (2014) begin with a minister's message from Deb Matthews, the Minister of Child and Youth Services and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. She discusses her experiences with consultations, thanking everyone who was involved. She also provides a call to all Ontarians to continue this work in the coming years.

*Breaking the Cycle* is especially significant because it directly addresses child poverty as its main priority. While other strategies address child poverty implicitly through their actual techniques of poverty reduction (for example, education or childcare), *Breaking the Cycle* explicitly addresses child poverty throughout. It states that the most effective way to defeat poverty is to break the intergenerational cycle that continuously and wrongfully affects children. Hence, it sets out a target to reduce child poverty by 25% in 5 years by building on previous investments like education and the introduction of an Ontario Child Benefit. The introductory chapter outlines initiatives and provides a case for action, a vision, and key principles that guide the strategy. It concludes by claiming that it was created out of consultations with Ontarians, as well as with other areas that have completed PRS's.

The case the strategy provides is both a moral and economic case:

The moral imperative to reduce poverty is a clear one. We all agree that children should have the opportunity to succeed in life, and that people facing challenges should be supported. (...) However, we have another equally compelling rationale for reducing poverty. As a society, we can't afford it. An educated, healthy and employable workforce is critical to the economic future of this province. Our economy is changing before our eyes and we need everyone to be ready to contribute to our future prosperity.  
-- "Executive Summary," *Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

Thus, the strategy uses both concern for individuals (particularly children) and communities, and concern for the economy as rationale for the creation of the strategy.

The vision for the strategy fits with that rationale:

A province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, and contribute to and participate in a prosperous and healthy Ontario  
-- "Introduction," *Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

where each person is well enough to be able to contribute to the prosperity of the province as a whole.

The introduction also identifies key principals: kids first (to break the cycle), kids live in families (to help families help their children), community (to engage communities in the initiatives), unleashing potential (allowing everyone to participate in the economy by removing barriers), diversity (recognizing unique risks of poverty for vulnerable groups), respect (treating everyone with dignity), engagement (engaging all Ontarians, especially people in poverty in this strategy), determination (it will take hard work to defeat poverty), cooperation (everyone needs to join together), and effectiveness (scarce tax dollars should be spent effectively).



The first chapter of the Ontario PRS identifies that children in poverty experience significantly worse outcomes than middle- or upper-class children. According to the strategy, the best way to address these outcomes is by providing children with more education and services from a young age. The initiatives provided in this chapter largely aim to a) ensure children are healthy and capable of developing properly through programs like screening for newborns and immunizations, and b) to ensure children begin their education from a young age and continue through until adulthood through programs like community based learning centers, student success initiatives, and funding for post-secondary education. This chapter also identifies two groups of youth who are at a higher risk and require specialized attention through grants and funding: Aboriginal youth and crown wards.

Chapters 2 and 3 of the strategy focus on initiatives addressing communities and all other Ontarians, respectively. Building community and engaging members of the community in helping one another or creating community-based solutions is also stated as an effective way to reduce poverty. Here, community building takes the form of creating community spaces for all people to take part in. This is conducted by allowing groups to rent space in public schools and creating summer programs for youth.

Initiatives that address all people focus largely on securing jobs through skill development and housing. There are a number of initiatives regarding skill development due to Ontario's changing economy. If people are losing their job in one area, it is recommended that they enter skill retraining in order to shift their focus to another, more effective area. Regarding housing, the government is creating an affordable housing strategy. This chapter also highlights key groups that require specialized attention:

women, new Ontarians, people with disabilities, aboriginal peoples, seniors, and the homeless.

Chapter 4 addresses creating a more effective spending system. It highlights that the government already spends a significant amount of money on poverty reduction each year. Instead of simply investing more money, this chapter argues that it would be better to invest money in a more effective way. Hence, this chapter proposes a social system review to reduce overlap, using a person-centered approach that would enable services to be more effective for people accessing them, the creation of a social policy institute to evaluate social policies, and the creation of a social innovation approach alongside the University of Waterloo program (loosely connected to the Tamarack Institute involved in the municipal strategies).

Chapters 5 and 6 refer to the government's commitment to measuring and reporting progress on their goals, as well as the implementation of the strategy. As previously mentioned, the government has set out a target to reduce child poverty by 25% in 5 years. Alongside this target, they identify eight indicators on their "Child and Youth Opportunity Wheel" (Appendix D): School readiness (conducted by teachers to determine how ready a child is to enter grade 1), educational progress (standardized testing – EQAO scores), high-school graduation rates, birth weights, depth of poverty (percentage of people in a family receiving lower than 40% the median adjust income), low income measure (percentage of people in a family receiving lower than 50% of the median adjusted income), Ontario housing measure (not yet developed), and standard of living (not yet developed). These indicators are thought to demonstrate progress or lack thereof, identifying areas for future improvement. The Ontario government commits to

measuring these indicators and re-evaluating the strategy every 5 years by conducting more consultations.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9, put out a call to the federal government, municipal governments, and all Ontarians to become involved in the fight against poverty. The strategy presents specific outlines for the federal government (employment insurance evaluation, early learning and childcare, affordable housing, and quality of life for aboriginal Canadians) and the municipal government (transit and recreation). Regarding all Ontarians, the strategy outlines that everyone should have a role in this strategy by mentoring or helping out where possible.

This strategy also provides different sidebars that address various points in the strategies such as “What’s New,” “Did You Know?” or “Success Stories.” These sidebars provide information that relates to the chapter but does not actually affect the strategy or its implementation. Instead, they highlight initiatives, factual information or statistics, and stories from different communities that have successfully reduced poverty.

The Ontario government is now consulting for their third round of PRS creation. The second PRS, *Realizing Our Potential*, provides an update on the above indicators, largely addressing the progress they have made over the past 5 years (despite not meeting their goal). They also develop new indicators including counting those who are not in education, training, or employment; long term unemployment; and the percentage of vulnerable populations in poverty.

#### *Creating Pathway to Potential*

Before the provincial and federal strategies were created, the Tamarack Institute was founded in 2002 by Alan Broadbent of the Avana Cooperation and Maytree Fund

and Paul Born of Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA).<sup>24</sup> At the time, CODA was working on developing a poverty reduction strategy for the city of Waterloo. The Tamarack Institute began out of a coordination between these two people, seeking to understand how to engage stakeholders to work together for poverty reduction.<sup>25</sup> The Maytree Foundation was able to provide funding for the Tamarack Institute in its early days. Tamarack eventually gained more funding from the McConnel Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Suncor, Canada Government, Kindred Credit, Conrad Grebel University College (of which Paul Born attended), Centre for Peace Advancement, Google, and Microsoft.<sup>26</sup> They have also since expanded their team significantly involving a variety of people who specialize in policy, law, psychology, social innovation (program funded by McConnel Foundation), business, community services, social work, health, and economics and finance.<sup>27</sup>

The Tamarack institute has two goals:

The first was to establish a learning centre that would provide research and document real stories, exemplary practice and effective applications for community change. (...) Our second big goal was to apply what we learned to end poverty.

--*"Who We Are," Tamarack Institute*

To address these goals, the Tamarack Institute created a learning center and an initiative titled *Vibrant Communities*. The Learning Center provides a variety of resources and workshops from non-profits, governments, businesses and community members for

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<sup>24</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Who We Are"

<sup>25</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Who We Are"

<sup>26</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Celebrating 15 Years of Community Change" 2017

<sup>27</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Tamarack Team"

advancing positive community change. The Learning Center operates on five ideas: collective impact, community engagement, collaborative leadership, community innovation, and evaluating impact.<sup>28</sup> *Vibrant Communities* involves two separate city-based initiatives: Cities Reducing Poverty and Cities Deepening Community. Cities who belong to the initiative receive access to the Learning Center, as well as personalized coaching.

Windsor's *Pathway to Potential* was created as a result of membership in this initiative, alongside 330 other municipalities across Canada. The Vibrant Communities initiative provides cities with a framework to create a PRS. Both the Tamarack Institute and the Maytree Foundation were involved in the consultations for the Ontario and Canadian PRS's.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, these strategies follow a similar trajectory and method to the provincial and national strategies, as well as the PRSP's, with a large focus on measurement and social enterprise. They take four general approaches: comprehensive local initiatives, grassroots collaboration involving all sectors, identification of community assets, and a commitment to learning.<sup>30</sup> According to their 2017 report, the Vibrant Communities initiative places a large focus on collective impact as developed by the Foundation Strategy Group (FSG) out of Harvard Business School. The FSG has also provided consultations to the World Bank.<sup>31</sup> The Tamarack Institute describes their Vibrant Communities initiative as a "pilot project" of collective impact that examines

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<sup>28</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Who We Are"

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Cities Reducing Poverty Brochure" 2020

<sup>31</sup> Foundation Strategy Group, "About"

how one framework can be applied to unite all different levels of actors towards a common goal.<sup>32</sup>

The Tamarack Institute created a guide for cities to create a common-agenda approach that brings together multiple sectors before creating a PRS. A common agenda has three purposes:

1. To serve as the outcome of a shared vision that was derived from broad-ranging consultations and research that mobilizes communities to change. This vision is representative of what partners have learned throughout the community's engagement process.
2. To form a common understanding and rationale for the key goals and strategies that a network of partners has identified and chosen to work on together.
3. To serve as a roadmap for how partners have agreed to work together that includes a budget and a description of governance structure.

-- *Guide: Developing a Common Agenda for a Poverty Reduction Plan, Tamarack Institute*

The Tamarack Institute also highlights the benefits of the common agenda approach, such that it prioritizes community engagement; allows a plan between the four sectors: government, non-profit, business, and lived experience where all sectors are equal; provides a systematic way to see who is not involved in the discussion; brings individual and organizations together; allows the creation of new ideas; and fosters creativity.

Before creating a strategy, they recommend a step-by-step process that involves creating a team that involves members from the four sectors and sets out milestones, funds, and activities; identifying the four conditions for success including a history of

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<sup>32</sup> Tamarack Institute, "Who We Are"

collaboration, a community drive to end poverty, supportive community leaders, and engaged funders; planning an event to engage community leaders; create teams based upon the engagement of community leaders including a leadership roundtable, data team, listening team, communications team, and action team; and finally, creating a plan that includes information about consultations, agenda, governance structure, priority areas, measuring, budget, and a call-to-action.<sup>33</sup>

The Tamarack Institute also created a guide to creating a PRS that is comprehensive of many different approaches used through their initiatives and research over the course of their existence entitled *A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks*. The guide begins by stating the different ways that poverty is defined and measured, alongside the implications that has for policy practice. It then creates a comprehensive framework that shows poverty reduction as having multiple levels, as well as multiple involved sectors. It then outlines different strategies that have been used in the past. These can be either programmatic (as directing people through programs), or systemic (as changing economic, political, social systems). The guide also outlines a difference between childhood interventions (termed ‘first chance’), household interventions (termed ‘second chance’), community, or organizational. Finally, it outlines priorities that PRS should take: sustenance (basic needs), adaptation (coping skills), engagement (sense of belonging), and opportunity (economic).

The Vibrant Communities initiative focuses on income support, employer practices, early childhood education, workforce development, affordable goods and

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<sup>33</sup> Tamarack Institute, “Guide: Developing a Common Agenda for a Community Plan to Reduce Poverty” n.d.

services, and housing.<sup>34</sup> *Pathway to Potential* follows the VC initiative and states that many significant funders have embraced this model. Where previous PRS consultations and models generally follow an approach that emphasizes the economic sense for reducing poverty, the Tamarack model focuses on the positive effects for community relationships and social capital, alongside the economic effects.

*Pathway to Potential.*

*Pathway to Potential* is a significantly shorter strategy than the Canadian and Ontarian strategies because their jurisdiction is much smaller. In the early years (2009) *Pathway to Potential* outlined a vision and mission; created a steering committee, roundtable, and subcommittees; engaged with community; secured investments; and created a plan for going forward. They developed a vision of a Windsor-Essex County where:

All residents of Windsor and Essex County will be valued and included in their community and experience social and economic wellbeing.

-- "*How We Got Here,*" *Pathway to Potential 2015*

They also created a mission to realize that vision, by reducing poverty and ensuring the social and economic well-being of residents. This mission is based on four pillars including empowerment, inclusion, voice, and dignity. This initial report largely outlines the responsibilities of the committees that were developed including hiring staff, conducting advocacy and outreach, investing in programs, and aligning with provincial values.

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<sup>34</sup> Tamarack Institute, "A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks" n.d.



In 2015, *Pathway to Potential* created a strategic plan outlining the committee's plans for reducing poverty over the next four years. It begins by explaining the development of the mission and vision and outlines four priorities for this strategy. These are: literacy and lifelong learning, income security and equality, employment and training, and food security. The rationale for the priorities are that literacy affects health and well-being as well as economic development, productivity and efficiency; income affects health and well-being through one's ability to meet their basic needs; employment affects and is affected by economic challenges; and food has serious implications for one's survival and health.

The goals for this strategy largely follow those four priorities by creating, implementing or supporting various initiatives that will aid development in those four priorities. Literacy initiatives include integrated services for children and youth, education system development, training for those on Ontario Works to become employable, full-day kindergarten, youth centers, and increased funding for post-secondary. Income initiatives include the living wage campaign, minimum wage advisory panel, increases in Ontario Works and Ontario Child Benefit, among others. Employment initiatives include transportation changes, social enterprise strategies and task force, and training and development. Food security initiatives include Food Matters program, food co-operations, and student nutrition programs.

Pathway to Potential also commits to measuring success along these goals and measures. They have created a Research and Evaluation working group in order to examine their data and track their progress. They also outline that, as part of the Cities Reducing Poverty Network, they have access to the best research and practices out there.

Through this network, they have used the collective impact model which has been embraced by many funders.

In providing the precursor events that ultimately influence the development of the PRS's, I've hoped to demonstrate that PRS's are seen as required. The precursor events and reports generally provide a call-to-action by making the case that poverty is first detrimental to the population, and second actionable by governments, social services, and the general public. As mentioned above, the call-to-action invokes concerns about family violence, disease, changing family structures, health care, inequality, and economic recession. They do this by using statistics, anecdotes, experts, and referring to other strategies. Alongside the call-to-action, precursors also provide a structure that PRS's can follow, generally borrowing from other jurisdictions.

## 6. ANALYSIS

This chapter draws on the literature review in chapter 3 and the conceptual framework in chapter 2 to analyze how the PRS's detailed above reinforce economic subjectivity, and how they have come to be accepted as best practice.

Following the governmentality literature, the regulation of populations seeks to create citizens who are mobilized to advance the *raison d'état*. That is, citizens who work to create a state that is strong, healthy, and capable of remaining competitive in a global economy (Foucault 1979). Under a political economic truth regime, wealth generation and economic productivity demonstrate strength within a state. Holding the market as the site of veridification, a state that is capable of generating wealth and remaining competitive is a proper state.

Documents and policies that seek to act on the public body or regulate the public body generally follow the dominant regime of truth and the interest of the state. The following section will use the PRS documents to examine the rationale for reducing poverty, the place of social actors, the techniques used to reduce poverty, and the tools of legitimization employed in order to outline how the PRS's on a national, provincial, and municipal level follow a political economic regime of truth in order to create citizens who are motivated towards wealth creation and economic productivity. The political economic regime of truth holds that wealth creation and human capital development are best for both individuals and the state as a whole, linking individual economic success with social success.

### *Neoliberal Subjectivities*

The current model of poverty reduction generally follows that of the PRSP model from the World Bank and IMF. The structure of the PRS's largely follow the 5 priorities outlined by the PRSP approach: 1) country-owned: in this case, each government (municipal, provincial, federal) has their own PRS that they are able to tailor to their unique needs, 2) results driven: such that each PRS commits a target and indicators, measuring and reporting on an annual basis, 3) comprehensive in recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty: such that each PRS attempts to address the multiple causes and effects of poverty such as housing, food security, and unemployment, among others, 4) partnership oriented: such that each PRS draws on multiple community organizations and other levels of government to address the causes of poverty, and 5) long-term perspective: such that each PRS makes both short term and long term initiatives. In the words of *Breaking the Cycle* (2009):

It is informed by the clear understanding that any serious poverty reduction strategy must transcend four-year government mandates and span decades, if not generations.  
--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

While the general structure of the PRS's follow that of the PRSP model, there is a fundamental difference that needs to be accounted for. This difference is located in the suggested approach to reducing poverty. The PRSP approach advocates for countries to commit to macro-economic restructuring, stabilization, encouraging private sector investment, and infrastructure development. The stated goal of this restructuring and development is largely to increase profit by transitioning to a market economy so that

countries can pay back their conditional loans and generate more wealth for the country to be spent on reducing poverty.

In Canada, the stated rationale for reducing poverty has less to do with economic restructuring and more to do with balancing or stabilizing the current economic system through individual interventions, normalization, and moralization. This is largely because western countries like Canada already operate under a market-based economic system and a liberal political system. In comparison to non-industrialized countries, they are wealthy. The PRSP approach suggests that switching to a market-based economy will solve or reduce poverty for developing countries. However, the persistence of poverty and wealth disparities in Canada in spite of their market-based economy requires attention. How is it that countries with a market-based system continue to have poverty when international organizations claim that a market-based system will solve poverty for developing countries?

Following the political economic regime of truth that holds the market as the site of veridification, an individual's capacity to enterprise themselves and insure themselves against risks will place them in their 'natural' ranking. The market, which is located independent from government and state, decides the *true* price and value of everything. Those who work hard will achieve success and wealth will be returned to them. Equality is based on opportunity, that is, where each individual has the capacity to act in their own interest and generate wealth for themselves. Thus, 'true' neoliberal equality is not social or economic equality, but equality of opportunity.

The very existence of poverty (alongside many other practical contradictions (see Harvey 2005)) demonstrates fault in the neoliberal thought foundation. Instead of

locating these barriers or failures within the neoliberal system, the strategies and popular discourse suggest that it is people's own failures to participate in the economy that prevent a fully equal society. The strategies frequently make the argument that poverty costs the system tremendously:

Poverty costs this province in more than just lost potential. It costs us in our health care system, our justice system, our child protection system, and social assistance system. It costs our economy and our society as a whole suffers.  
—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

Hence, poverty costs in two ways: lost potential and public systems. Lost potential costs because full participation is not being achieved and therefore, people who could be contributing to the economy are not. Public systems cost because people in poverty are more likely to use or rely on them. Public systems also prevent a full neoliberalization of markets because they are funded by the state. Under this logic, in order to create a more efficient state, it is necessary to reduce poverty so that less people are relying on government funded programs and more people are able to produce and contribute to the economy.

While the potential and services cost rationale serves to explain how poverty persists despite a market-based economic system, it is also used to encourage people to become involved in poverty reduction techniques. Frequently, the strategies use language that suggests that 'all of us' are affected when people are in poverty:

When too many people live in poverty, we all suffer because our province is leaving untapped potential on the sidelines  
-- *Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

The vision of Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy is a Canada without poverty, because we all suffer when our fellow citizens are left behind. We are all in this together, from governments, to community

organizations, to the private sector, to all Canadians who are working hard each and every day to provide for themselves and their families.

*--Opportunity for All, Canada Government, 2018*

The process also strengthened P2P's resolve to make poverty 'everyone's business'; reducing poverty is not a matter of charity but an investment in our collective prosperity.

*--Pathway to Potential, 2015*

Thus, it is not only those in poverty who should become involved or invested in poverty reduction, but all citizens because we are all impacted in various ways. Reducing poverty will help everyone become more prosperous.

Following neoliberal ideals, only those who do not work hard or do their duty of contribution would be in poverty. However, the strategies recognize that many people in poverty work very hard and are still in poverty. In these cases, hard work does not pay off, nor does it equate to economic success. The PRS's recognize that poverty prevents people from being able to access their individual rights or the opportunities that should be awarded to all people:

All people in poverty have one thing in common – a lack of opportunity.

*--Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

As we have learned, low-income Ontarians have an abundance of talent, drive and capacity – but sometimes barriers are put in place, or the opportunity is denied to develop this talent.

*--Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

Tackling poverty means more than providing the bare necessities. It also means promoting opportunity and removing discriminatory barriers (...) that prevent people from getting ahead.

*--Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

In this case, opportunity refers to the opportunity to participate in the job market and generate wealth for oneself. Opportunity is a concept and cannot be provided or given. Hypothetically, stating that each person has the opportunity to get a job or to generate wealth does not mean that every person will get a job or generate wealth. Instead, the giving of opportunity functions to shift the responsibility for exiting poverty onto individual choice. While the government might create circumstances that *allow* each person to get a job, it is up to the individual to seize the opportunity that is being given to them.

Opportunity functions alongside the related terms ‘potential’ and ‘empowerment’ which are frequently used throughout the strategies. This bundle of concepts are tactics that make individuals capable of self-governance because they highlight an individual’s capacity to act. The purpose of PRS’s is to make individuals into subjects who are empowered to act as productive citizens, capable of ‘realizing their potential’ as a neoliberal subject and seeking the opportunity of wealth generation that has been afforded to them.

Developing human capital instead of directly giving provisions to the poor in order to reduce dependency is a continuous discourse that can be seen in early poverty reduction techniques. Dependency is a drain on public systems, but also prevents people from freedom of action. Hence, reducing dependency and developing capital in its place allows people to act in their own interest. However, as mentioned in chapter 2, it is through people’s actions as free citizens that they are regulated. Following Cruikshank (1999), the transformation between the dependent and the independent largely occurs in a



transformation of desire: one's desire to act productively, work, and become a good economic citizen.

The strategies focus is thus two-fold: first creating opportunity for those who will work hard and seize it, and second acting upon people's desires so that they want to participate in the economy. The strategies address the hardworking impoverished directly:

Opportunity for All will help reduce poverty, support Canadians working hard to join the middle class and build a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country where everyone benefits from economic growth;  
—*Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

[The strategy] sets out specific indicators that will be used to monitor progress toward a country that we all want: a Canada in which hard work allows families to be better off;  
—*Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

For many Canadians, particularly those working hard to join the middle class, this is a vision to promote engagement and social inclusion so we can thrive together;  
—*Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

and provides a number of initiatives that will address the hard-working Canadians to ensure that they can bring their talents and desires into the realm of work. These initiatives can take the form of temporary relief in extreme circumstances (Employment Insurance, paid leave) or long-term initiatives that provide those who want to work an opportunity to do so (job creation, increased benefits, increased incomes, social innovation grants). Hard-working people are people who do not *deserve* to live in poverty, and thus deserve help as it is given.

In the past, poverty reduction was largely conducted under concerns about the spread of immorality, disease, and deviance, assuming that impoverished populations

were largely at risk of experiencing but also spreading these conditions (Valverde 2008). The method to address these concerns was largely individual observation and training to embody middle-class habits of thrift, cleanliness, and religious practice (Valverde 2008, Margolin 1997).

Today's PRS's continue to address concerns about immorality, disease, and deviance, however, continuously relate these concerns to economic concerns. For example:

An unexpected illness or the onset of a disability or chronic health condition—even an accident—can devastate a family who may have been doing well until then. Illness can result in individuals no longer being able to work  
— *Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

The health risk is not imposed as a concern for the spread of illness nor individual lives, but the effect that health problems have on the workplace. Invoking the risk that the economy may not be strong in the future ensures that individuals take actions in the present to insure themselves against that risk. Health measures such as pre-screening for newborns and pregnant mothers or vaccinations are largely used in poverty reduction because they:

[Help] to reduce lost work time for parents due to their or their child's illness, and to reduce the burden on the health care system.  
— *Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

Other techniques like food security:

Increasing food security helps those in need build resilience and protect against the risks of low success in school and the labour market;  
— *Pathway to Potential, 2015*

childcare:

thousands more parents are receiving fee subsidies so they can go to work, knowing that their children are safe and learning;

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

or transportation:

Inadequate access to transportation is a key barrier to employment for some social assistance recipients. If people cannot get to work, they cannot work

—*Pathway to Potential, 2015*

are also related back to economic concerns such that people require social and physical well-being in order to adequately perform and hold a job. These measures increase people's opportunities and abilities to contribute to the labour market.

Where opportunities are not taken, concerns about the economy and economic recession are used. For example:

An educated, healthy and employable workforce is critical to the economic future of this province. Our economy is changing before our eyes and we need everyone to be ready to contribute to our future prosperity.

--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

And in a global economy, where Ontario is competing with the rest of the world, we have to have well trained, well educated and highly productive workers to sustain our advantage.

--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

This municipal leadership on poverty reduction has been invaluable, providing much-needed stability for a region that has faced persistent economic challenges.

--*Pathway to Potential, 2015*

The elements laid out in Opportunity for All aim to bring us to a better Canada in 2030. A Canada that is both a global economic leader and a kind and generous country where no one is left behind. A Canada that adapts to changing

economic conditions and benefits from a healthy and productive workforce.

—*Opportunity for All, Canada Government, 2018*

Risk is a tool of subjectification and insurance is a tool of risk (Ewald 1991). By invoking risk that is calculable (the possibility that any danger could occur at any time), individuals are responsible to insure themselves against that danger. Skill-training and education help to ensure that the workforce is both productive and flexible, so that the collapse of one industry does not mean mass job loss or economic recession. The strategies state:

These [economic] changes mean that some people may find themselves needing to upgrade their skills or retrain and transition into new fields of work.

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

Second Career (...) is already helping a number of unemployed laid-off workers through a long-term training plan that launches them into high skills careers in growing sectors of the economy

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

As the job market increasingly places a premium on a diverse skill set, Canadians may need to upgrade their skills throughout their careers.

—*Opportunity for All, Canada Government 2018*

The City aims to help our educational institutions develop a skilled and adaptable workforce, and for roughly over 21,000 individuals and households in receipt of social assistance in Windsor-Essex, the City has a goal to primarily enrol people on Ontario Works in activities that increase employability and lead to employment.

—*Pathway to Potential, 2015*

Skill training and education serve both to help populations who are already in the workforce continue to be in the workforce, but also to train and observe other populations so that they follow routines and schedules. This logic again places the cause of poverty

on individuals who are simply not skilled enough to contribute to the economy as they should. Under this logic, addressing poverty should target individuals and their skills, not economic challenges to finding work.

While adults may already be a lost cause, children are not. The focus of the strategies, and indeed many of the precursor events, are children. Children are actively addressed for three reasons: 1) their potential is essentially limitless, 2) they are a burden for parents who need time off work to care for them, and 3) people tend to care for children because of their constructed innocent, passive and dependent nature.

Firstly, alongside the above mentioned “opportunity,” and “empowerment,” children are thought to have the most potential because of their age, malleability, and adaptability. All three strategies highlight that children who grow up in poverty are more likely to stay in poverty as adults, hence invoking the cycle of poverty imagery. The strategies call for breaking the cycle at a young age through early intervention programs and continuing this intervention through the rest of their lives:

The research is clear – investing in the early years will give us the highest possible return on our investment. The evidence in the area of human development (..) demonstrates how important it is that our children get off to the very best start possible.

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

Strategies advocate for pregnancy and new-born screening, vaccination programs, Early Years Centers, Parenting and Family Literacy Centers, full day kindergarten, after school activities, and student success teams in schools, among others. The cycle of poverty means that poverty is quite literally passed from parent to child through habits and a continuous lack of opportunity. However, the Canadian strategy itself suggests that long

term experiences of poverty are rare (1.5%) and the United Way 2014 report states that only approximately 20-25% of low-income children continue to be low income into adulthood. Regardless, interventions in children's lives have less to do with resources and aid, and more to do with getting them away from the home from a young age in order to give them the 'right experiences.' By encouraging them to access activities, full day learning, and family centers outside of their homes, children are trained in proper habits:

In obvious ways, they are acquiring the basic skills they need to succeed in a competitive, knowledge-driven world. In less obvious ways, they are learning how to think, how to behave, and how to become productive and successful members of a society.

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

When kids get the right kinds of experiences at an early age, they arrive at school ready to learn, and are more likely to keep up with their schoolwork throughout their education.

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

As Qvortrup (2009), Corsaro (2016), and Lee (2001) have previously highlighted in other realms, while child poverty does have the potential to negatively impact a child's quality of life, child poverty in the strategies is only addressed insofar as it relates to their future success. As Rosen (2019) states, even the sharpest critics of neoliberalism will argue that neoliberal interventions are good for children. However, education and skill-building cannot reduce poverty as they cannot increase resources that are not there (such as jobs or income). Instead, education and skill-building seek to train children to act in a proper, disciplined, productive way.

Secondly, education and activities serve both to teach children how to be productive citizens and to free up time so that parents can attend work. From this adult-related perspective, childcare is offered so that parents can trust that their child is in a

safe place where they are able to access learning while parents are at work. Parents who cannot afford childcare or who must stay at home with their child for another reason are unable to work and generate income. Under this logic, children are a burden to be rid of. Childcare thus frees time for parents to work hard and contribute to the economy. The motivation for these interventions is purely adult based and does not consider childhood or children's best interests.

Finally, children are frequently used as a motivation for poverty reduction. The UN-CRC and the House of Commons resolution both address child poverty. It is not a child's fault that they are in poverty because they have no control over the economic situation they are born into and it is assumed that they cannot work due to labour laws. While adults have already made 'poor' decisions that have placed them in poverty, children have not. However, children are largely dependent on their parent's situation and help. Hence, children should have the opportunity to get out of poverty and become subjects who are capable of fulfilling their (neoliberal) desires. Again, the neoliberal interventions mentioned above seek to give children the opportunity to exit poverty in the *future*.

*Breaking the Cycle* uses the following definition of poverty from MP Ken

Dryden:

A pregnant mother just a little less healthy, her newborn baby just a little underweight, a little less developed. A young child growing up just a little more sick a little more often, away from school just a few more days than other kids – just a little behind. Poverty is every day running a 100-metre race as if all the other kids are at the starting line – and they're 10 metres behind. Poverty is that 'just a little' that isn't 'just a little' at all

--*Breaking the Cycle*, Ontario Government 2009

This definition begins by highlighting the pregnant mother and her lack of health as the subject or reason for the newborn baby being underdeveloped. It continues along a linear logic suggesting that this first experience continues to impact the baby for the rest of its life – to no fault of its own. This child will eventually be behind the other kids, away from school more often, less likely to graduate, and less likely to get a good job. This linear causality from birth weight, to school attendance, to jobs, serves to both construct a normative childhood and to present neoliberal interventions as producing a positive outcome for children in their future. Regardless, the helpless child who is victim to his or her mother's circumstance is the object of the definition of poverty and the object needing to be saved.

This method of reducing (future) poverty is notable and fits with previous theorizing about childhood. Historically, children were seen as either passive recipients that internalize everything around them, or a threat to be controlled by society (Corsaro 2016). Considering either that children are passive or that they are a threat to be controlled, it figures that children are subject to intervention from a young age. These interventions seek either to prevent them from internalizing their parents' behaviours and becoming like them in the future or to prevent them from becoming deviant children as they are.

Presuming that people in poverty are incapable of giving their children proper experiences, and thus require outside intervention provides a moral basis for reducing poverty in this way. Under this logic, there is either an inherent or chosen character about the poor that requires outside intervention in order to stop its spread. Similar to past concerns about health and immorality, concerns about a lack of opportunity are invoked



as being passed from parent to child. These individualized interventions serve to moralize parents who are deemed incapable of raising a child. Parents and families are encouraged to also attend training and intervention in order to learn proper ways of parenting. These interventions seek to normalize parents through observation, surveillance, and training. However, if parents are seen as incapable, they are automatically viewed as marginalized, following Rose (1996). Because they are incapable of doing their duty as a parent and as a citizen by instilling proper neoliberal values in their children, they are undeserving of help. Instead, innocent children should be removed from the home or the situation so that they can get the right experiences that they need.

As Qvortrup (2009) and others have highlighted, children are largely viewed as future outcomes. Thus, interventions that address children are future focused. There is no question of whether or not these interventions are good for children as children in the present, but whether the interventions are good for society in the future. Qvortrup (2009) notes that in some cases interventions are good for both society and children, in which case both parties win. However, in cases where children suffer but society benefits, does the end justify the means? For example, when considering interventions for child poverty, does human capital development always benefit children in the present? Or, is it the best choice for children facing poverty?

Placing children in care from the moment they are born is strategic. Tailoring early childcare and programs to learning is also strategic. Developing human capital in place of ensuring that children have their material and emotional needs met is not in the best interest of the child. These institutions become more economic minded and focused on building an economy, and less focused on children's experiences. For example,

previous studies and pedagogues have identified that unorganized play is necessary for children (Corsaro 2016). However, placing children in learning institutions from a very young age prevents them from being able to play, consequently preventing them from developing their own social capacity and sense of themselves. Children are instead measured and observed on their abilities to conform to capitalist routines and productivity through test scores, attendance, ability to follow schedule, docility, and graduation rates. A good childhood is one that leads to a good outcome and a productive adulthood.

Both children and adults are funneled through various social service systems and institutions. These institutions have continued along the trajectory of early social work that focuses heavily on observing, analyzing and intervening. The COS model is largely responsible for today's individualized approach to social work as case work (Margolin 1997). Case work sees each individual as a case and attempts to provide training to that individual person so that they can access education and potentially employment in the future.

The stated goal of social services is to help people transition to the workplace, and thus, transition from dependency to independence. Hence, social services again work on the level of desire itself: to create a subject who desires independence and economic contribution. Analyzing and observing a subject first allows caseworkers or other institutional officers to determine how this subject relates to normative citizenship, what services or interventions are possible so that they can meet the criteria for normative citizenship, and then applying those interventions. Following Hacking's (2006) engines of discovery, if a subject is not currently capable of reformation they will be medicalized, diagnosed, treated, or held in some other capacity so they are not a threat to stability.

Again, a subject must desire to contribute, to better their situation, and to become independent in order for the state to provide assistance that works.

Therefore, the strategies commit to a continuous analysis and data collection by organizations and Statistics Canada. Similar to the PRSP model, these measurements are a biopolitical tool that have the potential to demonstrate which people, organizations, or communities are not conforming to the normative pathway, and thus require further intervention and regulation. However, the measurements used by the strategies do not inquire about well-being nor quality of life, but economic contributions.

The measurements used by the Canadian Government in *Opportunity for All* (Appendix C) are extensive, analyzing the three pillars identified by the strategy: dignity, opportunity and inclusion, and resilience and security. Dignity measures one's capability to meet their basic needs *so that they can contribute to the economy*, opportunity and inclusion measures one's ability to *fully participate in society* through skill generation, and security and resilience measures one's capacity for *re-entering the economic game* after facing setbacks. As stated by the PRS, these measures will allow groups to identify gaps in research and programs, generate data, and tailor solutions to specific communities.

The measurements used in *Breaking the Cycle* (Appendix D) are specifically tailored to youth and include birth weights, school readiness, educational progress, highschool graduation rates, depth of poverty, low income measure, Ontario housing measure, and standard of living. As mentioned in chapter 5, some of these measures are currently incomplete. However, of the measures that are complete, they all view children with a future mind. Each of the measures has a rationale that relates to a child's success

in the future. This success involves either success in school or success in the job market, again invoking the linear causality that weight at birth leads to preparedness for school, educational success, graduation rates, and employment. For example, the graduation rate rationale states:

High school graduation is an important predictor of a student's future earning power and ability to succeed in college or university.

--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

These measures do not address a child's quality of life, insofar as they address a child's future outcomes. Particularly noteworthy is the school readiness indicator addressed at age five by elementary school teachers:

Administered in Senior Kindergarten, it measures children's readiness to learn at school in five domains: physical health and well being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and general knowledge and communication skills.

--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government, 2009*

While there are a variety of possible flaws with this method of data collection, this measure analyzes a child's potential to follow a capitalist routine. Further excavating the measure, teachers are collecting data on a child's docility, passivity, ability to regulate their emotions, and ability to communicate which relate to becoming a good economic citizen not poverty, again reinforcing the idea that those in poverty are incapable of teaching their children these proper habits. Regarding physical health and well-being, teachers are directly analyzing the situation that children live in at home: how much sleep they get, what type of food they get. Again, these are conducted by teachers who are not in homes with students, and do not require input from students or parents. These largely serve as rationale for increased intervention on a basis of neglect.

While the strategy states that these measures will be used at a population level to determine which areas require further investment, the strategy highlights that these measures can also be used as an *individual level proxy*. Using these measures as an individual level proxy seeks not to intervene on the population as a whole, but on each individual *child*.<sup>35</sup> Each child is held up to the most individual level of analysis in order to ensure that they will flourish and produce a good outcome. This is a microphysics of power as developed by Foucault (1975). Measures might be capable of producing probabilities on a large, population scale, however, they cannot determine the reality of any child's individual home situation. Reducing a child to a set of quantifiable measurements that are external to them both denies them the opportunity to speak about their own situation, but also might lead to unnecessary or incorrect interventions taking place.

*Realizing Our Potential* adds additional measures that target adults including those who are not in training or employment, vulnerable populations experiencing poverty, and long-term unemployment.

*Pathway to Potential* also identifies indicators that they will examine (Appendix E). These are: literacy rates, graduation rates, post-secondary enrolment, wages, employment outcomes, and access to food. Again, these indicators seek to analyze these measures insofar as they demonstrate progress in terms of who is participating in the economy and who needs additional help or interventions.

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<sup>35</sup> A similar concern can be seen in risk assessments for child abuse. See Cradock 2004

### *Tools of Legitimization*

The strategies and their precursors utilize language and empirical techniques that seek to involve the general public in poverty reduction and present the strategies as true and best practice, such that they are accepted by the general public as necessary and good. These strategies provide a call to action by making the case that poverty reduction is a worthy cause to be conducted by all levels of society, and then demonstrating the best approach.

The continuous separation of the impoverished from the rest of the population throughout the strategies serves to cement the subjectivities of both the impoverished and the general population. Where the impoverished are seen as requiring intervention in order to become good economic citizens, the general population is called upon to aid with poverty reduction as citizens who are already constituted as good. The impoverished may be bad economic citizens by virtue of their incapacity of contribution, and consequently, those who exhibit success in this area are considered virtuous citizens. Throughout the strategies, the impoverished play the passive role as they need to be supported or helped by the government and organizations. They are incapable of action, and thus, need to become empowered to act.

As other scholars have mentioned, the stated virtuous goals of social work and welfare obscure their practice (Margolin 1997, Chapman and Withers 2019). Hence, those who practice social work feel that they are on the right side of history, despite the functions of regulation and control that are so often practiced by social workers. These virtuous goals recruit the general public to support or become engaged with this work. Throughout the current strategies, calls are made to the public that suggest that we all

should become involved in poverty reduction as a “strong and caring society.”<sup>36</sup> These calls appeal to our sense of ourselves as moral and virtuous citizens. Hence, as moral and virtuous citizens, becoming involved in reducing poverty through human capital development helps the society as a whole. According to the strategies, the best way for us to become involved in poverty reduction is by mentoring others - by demonstrating the proper way of existing and encouraging others to become like us.

The measures mentioned above are one technique used by the writers of the strategies to appeal to the public’s sense of truth. Empiricism is an epistemological orientation that views what can be known as what has been seen or sensed (Hacking 1991). This can either be in the case of one’s actual lived experiences, or in what has been observed through research, observation, and experimentation.

The measures, alongside previous statistics that are cited throughout the strategies and precursor events, provide an empirical basis for what is being stated. They use quantifiable data from a research study or data collection in some form. The strategies also claim that their statistics will be published so that they can be verified by the public and held accountable, thus invoking an image of transparency and truth-telling. The claim to identifying targets and indicators that will meet these targets is increasingly rational and bureaucratic, giving the process a streamlined and organized approach. Statistics largely appeal to the public sense of truth because of their seemingly objective, verifiable, and empirical nature. That is, they are capable of falsifying or verifying claims (Hacking 1991). When statistics are used in conjunction with statements, they seek to verify what is being claimed as true. Hence, the use of statistics about the determinants of poverty,

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<sup>36</sup> Ontario Government, Breaking the Cycle 2009

those in poverty, or the effect on the economy and communities are inscribed as truths to be acted upon.

The strategies also frequently point out that they were created using consultations with people who are living in poverty or working in impoverished communities.

Anecdotes both seek to personalize statements by giving them a name or a face, but also to provide another form of empirical verification. Anecdotes and consultations claim experiential knowledge. What can be known is what people have experienced. Giving people voice contributes to their empowerment, as they are included and responsabilized in the creation of the strategies, but also provides an additional layer of verification for what is being claimed.

The strategies frequently use the statements: “we all know,” “people in poverty know,” or “all parents know,” in order to verify this experiential knowledge using a claim to the universal. For example:

We all know what children need to be successful and, parents spend much of their time making sure their kids get what they need to succeed.

—*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

Without citing any specific source, this knowledge appears to be a common place that everyone shares. While people may not know what is being stated, or what is being stated might not be verifiable at all, “we all know” gives statements an obvious and incontestable sense of truth.

A third form of verification is used throughout the strategy, the use of the expert. Nutritionists, economists, policy experts, doctors, psychologists, community workers, government ministers, academics, or advisors are all named in the strategy and in consultations as having provided advice in the creation of the strategy. For example:



Economists agree that investments in reducing poverty would close the prosperity gap, benefiting individual Ontarians and their families, but also Ontario as a whole.  
--*Breaking the Cycle, Ontario Government 2009*

Experts are people who have a credential and institutional backing that endow the expert with a certain authority to speak on a specific topic, consequently endowing their statements with a sense of truth or verification. Hence, experts have both experimental/observational and experiential knowledge about a topic.

All of these techniques provide the documents with external validity. It is not only the state that is saying poverty reduction is actionable, but other institutions, reports, actors and data. In research, using multiple forms of verification can be referred to as *triangulation* (Tracey 2013). Triangulation is used to validate concepts and studies because multiple forms of research have come to the same conclusion (Tracey 2013). In this case, referring to statistics, anecdotes, experts, and other documents or institutes provides a greater sense of trust because the same result is continuously generated from multiple vantage points.

Strategies in the present frequently attempt to separate themselves from those in the past to demonstrate that they are new and innovative. While I have attempted to demonstrate that PRS's continue the same trajectory that they have always, the strategies frequently use language that suggests they are different. "For the first time," "historic investments," and "our bold new direction," are used to demonstrate that these PRS's are different from previous approaches. The present is almost always seen as a new era that is progressive, thus, present approaches are seen as progressive in comparison to the past. Identifying that these strategies are new automatically endows them with that sense of progression, even if they provide similar techniques to the past. Unless a reader has

extensive knowledge about past approaches, the suggestion of historical variation is enough to accept these as progressive.

Thus, PRS's seek to develop human capital as a technique to reduce poverty. Developing human capital locates problems of poverty as individual problems, not systemic problems. Thus, these interventions are individualistic involving education, skill-training, and public health measures. They seek to first observe the impoverished by placing them within institutions, and second to train them to embody a productive citizenship. This training of the impoverished begins at birth, as children are funneled through various forms of observation and intervention. Those who cannot or choose not to contribute to the economy are constructed as undeserving of aid as they have not provided the state with their piece of the contract.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In highlighting both the development and contents of the PRS's, I've demonstrated that PRS's have come to be accepted because of their history that constructs them as necessary, as well as techniques used throughout the strategies that endow them with authority. I also have demonstrated that PRS's provide individual interventions beginning at birth that seek to better both individuals and the state because this method of intervention fits with the current regime of truth.

The PRS's are developed after a long history stemming back before the creation of Canada as it is known today. Early interventions differentiated between the deserving and undeserving poor and allocated different methods of provisions on that basis (Baehre 1981). The institutionalization of poor relief also lead to an increase in observing, analyzing, and training (Margolin 1997, Valverde 2008). Current methods of poor relief stem out of these frameworks that manage individuals as cases with bad habits that can be reformed through intervention.

In order for PRS's to be created, poverty is first constructed as serious. Over time, various people who saw the detriments of poverty (whether this be physical, social, or economic) began to work at making a case for poverty reduction. These cases were presented at various points to the government and expressed concerns that people and organizations had regarding the state of poverty and the future. As a liberal country with a market-based economic system, people should be able to succeed *if they want to* (and they should always want to). Many of the cases highlight that there are barriers to realizing this logic. The cases also serve to construct poverty as amenable to action. They generally borrow from other models, especially the World Bank IMF model that set the

stage for country wide poverty reduction, in order to provide examples for how poverty can be reduced.

Given that the PRSP model (beginning in 1999) suggests market reformation as the most effective way to reduce poverty, developed countries began creating PRS's that uphold neoliberal market systems as effective by locating poverty as a problem of individual economic failure and bad parenting. These PRS's follow social investment, Third Way politics, and human capital development, by identifying that social well-being is only located within economic well-being. This logic helps to make the case for *all of us* that this manner of poverty reduction is the right thing to do. While strategies appeal largely to social and individual well-being, they still hold that economic contribution and neoliberalization of markets by reducing dependency on social assistance will lead to prosperity for all.

PRS's themselves advocate heavily for initiatives that empower populations to take control over their own situation and act as neoliberal subjects. Instead of forcing individuals to work, they are encouraged to want to work and to see work as the only proper way of existence. It is through work that basic needs should be met, and additional wealth should be generated. Social services and other training initiatives like education and skill-building seek to first observe which individuals are not contributing to the economy and acting as normative citizens. They are then capable of determining which impoverished individuals deserve additional support, and which deserve additional training.

This method of reducing poverty focuses heavily on children, as the future of the nation and economy. Strategies recommend that children are screened from the womb

onwards. Encouraging children and families to enter into institutions from this very young age ensures that they will be able to be observed and acted upon if necessary. Children are viewed not as children who deserve a good quality of life now, but as future economic contributors. While they are the direct focus of the strategies, they are entirely marginalized from its creation as well as its operationalization. As Qvortrup (2009) mentions, if poverty reduction techniques end up being good for children, it is only by chance. These strategies seek to raise children out of poverty in *the future*, not in their present state.

Through the strategies' commitments to measurement, empirical knowledge, and historical variation, the general public has accepted PRS's as good practice at reducing poverty because of their authority. It is not that we blindly accept bad information or bad practices, but these practices appear wholly good because of their subject matter and how they are constituted in discourse.

Through this project, I have attempted to demonstrate that perhaps current poverty reduction techniques require more attention than they have been given. Continuing on this path cannot reduce poverty due to poverty's systemic nature and certainly does not address quality of life for people or children who experience poverty. Instead, poverty reduction techniques locate poverty as an individual failure that requires individual intervention. This discourse serves to reinforce the merit of a market-based economic system, while continuing to produce subjects who are mobilized towards economic contribution. These strategies affirm both the subjectivities of the impoverished and the subjectivities of the affluent in relation to each other. We are called on, as members of the general public, to contribute to and model good citizenship behaviour. However,

changing behaviour cannot address poverty. Those who cannot or do not change their behaviour *and* enter into the economic realm in a productive way will never be capable of citizenship and are destined to remain impoverished forever.

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## **APPENDICES**

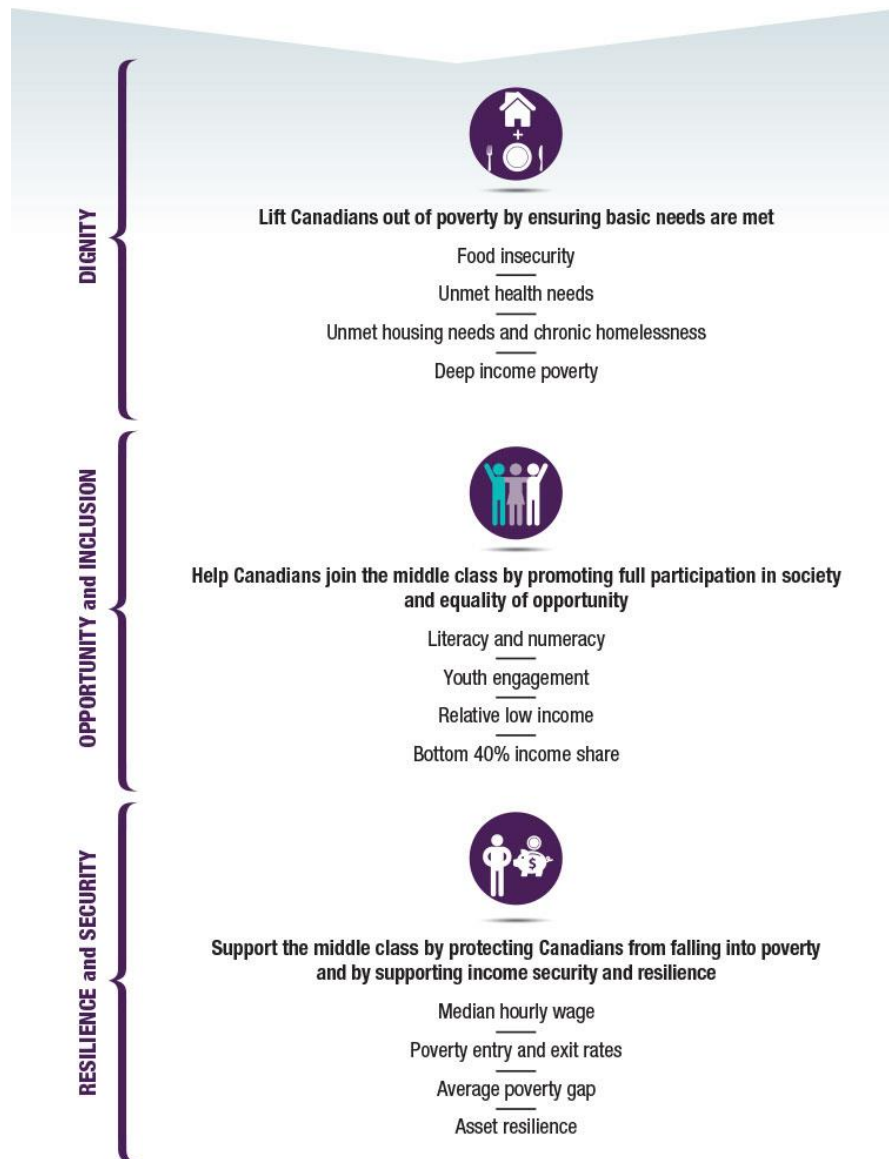
### **APPENDIX A - List of PRSP Countries**

Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Macedonia, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia

## APPENDIX B - Coding Chart (sample)

Text	In Vivo	Focused	Questions and Notes
<b>O-PRS Introduction</b>			
This is a Poverty Reduction Strategy that, for the first time in Ontario's history, sets out a target for reducing poverty in the province. It's a strategy that seeks to improve opportunities for people who are too often denied them.	<p>Strategy that for the first time in history</p> <p>Sets out a target for reducing poverty</p> <p>Seeks to improve opportunities</p> <p>People who are too often denied them</p>	<p>Suggestion of historical variation which seeks to legitimize the strategy</p> <p>Creates a measurable goal and target – this both serves accountability and surveillance</p> <p>Opportunity focused language, conceptual</p> <p>Omitting power relations by excluding who is denying people of their opportunity</p>	<p>Possible theme: historical variation or legitimization</p> <p>Connection to bureaucracy and biopolitics</p> <p>How does improving opportunity translate into practice?</p> <p>Denied opportunity from whom? Who is the active participant here?</p>

## APPENDIX C - Opportunity for All Measures

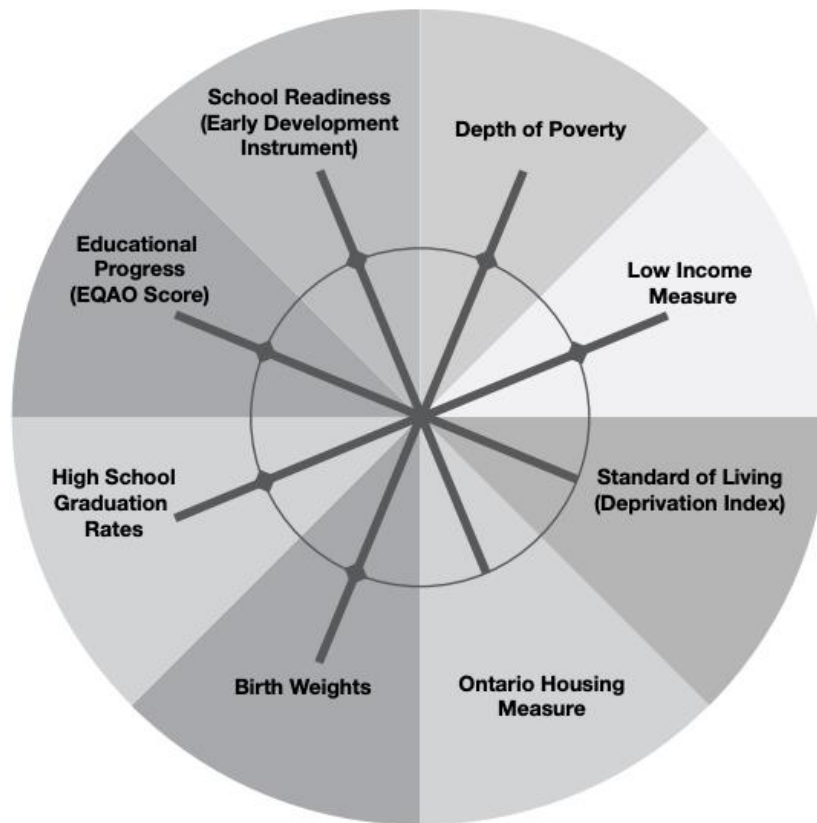




## APPENDIX D- Breaking the Cycle Measures

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**Child and Youth Opportunity Wheel**



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### **Measure #1: School Readiness Indicator: Early Development Instrument**

**Description:** A population-measure of children's readiness-to-learn at school based on a representative sample of children from across the province. Administered in Senior Kindergarten, it measures children's readiness to learn at school in five domains: physical health and well being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and general knowledge and communication skills.

**Rationale:** Research demonstrates that a child's readiness to learn at age five is a predictor of future ability in school. Baseline: For 2003-2006, 72.7% of children showed no vulnerabilities in any of the five key areas of readiness-to-learn at school.

### **Measure #2: Educational Progress Indicator: EQAO Score**

**Description:** The score is based on a provincial assessment of student achievement against curriculum expectations. The indicator will reflect the overall scores on the Grade 6 reading, writing and math assessments.

**Rationale:** Success and improvement in these scores will reflect better student achievement results in elementary schools and contribute to improved future educational outcomes.

**Baseline:** For the 2007-08 assessment year, 65% of Grade 6 students are at or above the provincial standard on EQAO Assessments.

### **Measure #3: High School Graduation Rates Indicator: Graduation Rates**

**Description:** Represents the percentage of high school students who have earned an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, in each graduating year. Ontario's graduation rate measures the percentage of students who graduated within five years after having started Grade 9 together.

**Rationale:** High school graduation is an important predictor of a student's future earning power and ability to succeed in college or university.

**Baseline:** For the 2006-07 year, the high school graduation rate in Ontario was 75%.

### **Measure #4: Birth Weights Indicator: Healthy Birth Weights**

**Description:** The percentage of newborns born at a healthy weight for their gestational age.

**Rationale:** Research indicates that babies born to low-income families more often have below normal birth weights, which can put them at a higher risk for poor future health outcomes.

**Baseline:** 80% of Ontario-born babies were born at a healthy weight from 2004-2006.

### **Measure #5: Depth of Poverty Indicator: Low Income Measure (40%)**

**Description:** The percentage of children under 18 living in a family with an income less than 40% of the median adjusted family income in 2008.

**Rationale:** This indicator describes the number of people living in deep poverty.

**Baseline:** 9.2% of children live in families with incomes below this level in 2005.\* 90.8% of children live in families with incomes above this level in 2005.\*

### **Measure #6: Low Income Measure Indicator: Low Income Measure (50%)**

**Description:** The percentage of children under 18 living in a family with an income less than 50% of the median adjusted family income.

**Rationale:** This indicator describes the number of people living below a measure of income.

**Baseline:** 12.3% of children live in families with incomes below this level in 2005.\*  
87.7% of children live in families with incomes above this level in 2005.\*

**Measure #7: Ontario Housing Measure Indicator: Housing Measure**

**Description:** This indicator is currently under development. When completed, it will measure the percentage of Ontarians with access to stable and affordable housing.

**Rationale:** Access to adequate, stable, affordable housing is pivotal to a child's emotional and mental well being and contributes significantly to their ability to achieve academic goals.

**Baseline:** As a new measure, no baseline data currently exists.

**Measure #8: Standard of Living Indicator: Deprivation Index**

**Description:** This indicator would determine the number of households in the province with access to an acceptable standard of living. The measure identifies a household as "lacking necessities" if one or more of a list of items is involuntarily absent from the household. This indicator is currently under development in partnership with the Daily Bread Food Bank and Statistics Canada.

**Rationale:** This goes a step further than traditional income measures. It measures the daily reality of living in poverty. It includes the basic needs an average family would have, as well as other components, including social inclusion and participation. It will position Ontario as a leader in measuring poverty, similar to the Deprivation Index used in Ireland.

**Baseline:** As a new indicator, no baseline data currently exists.

## APPENDIX E – Pathway to Potential Measurements



PATHWAY TO POTENTIAL: STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 – 2018

## **VITA AUCTORIS**

Sydney Chapados was born in Sarnia, Ontario in 1996. She graduated from Vincent Massey Secondary School in Windsor, Ontario in 2014. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology from the University of Windsor in 2018. She is a candidate in the Master of Arts, Sociology degree at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Spring 2020.